



# RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

BY

J. H. STODDART

Illustrated



NEW YORK  
THE CENTURY CO.  
MCMII



## A PREFATORY NOTE

BY WILLIAM WINTER

ON a memorable night in the dramatic season of 1901-1902 the comedian James H. Stoddart, whose book of theatrical memories is now submitted to the reader, came forth at the Republic Theater, in New York, and astonished the audience with a great performance. The character was *Lachlan Campbell*, a representative Scotchman—proud, stern, self-contained, resolute, deeply religious, tender, and true—in a domestic play called “The Bonnie Brier Bush,” adroitly constructed out of episodes in the writings of that fine genius Ian Maclaren. The season, although busy and laborious, had not been fertile in fine things, and this imper-

## A PREFATORY NOTE

sonation, extraordinary for sincerity, elemental power, and overwhelming pathos, came upon the community with the force of a revelation. Spectators, even of the most hardened kind, suddenly found themselves impressed with the power of goodness and the dignity of virtuous human nature, and moved beyond control by the spectacle of strife, in a good man's heart, between the sense of justice and the sacred passion of paternal love. The theme is simplicity itself. The actor's treatment of the theme was that delicate exaggeration which produces the perfect effect of nature. A result so uncommon, gained with such facile ease and by means so simple, might well cause surprise. Since that night Mr. Stoddart has been recognized, by multitudes of contemporary playgoers who were almost heedless of him before, as one of the leaders in his profession.

Old playgoers, however, were not astonished by Mr. Stoddart's performance of *Lachlan Campbell*, for to them Mr. Stoddart had long been a leader. Achievements of this kind and actors of this order

## A PREFATORY NOTE

were more frequent in earlier times than they are now. Survivors of the generation that saw Burton and Blake in their prime and Wallack's Theater in its best days can recall a period when exceptional models of acting were frequently displayed, and when the stage rarely failed to reward attention by exhibitions of serious worth and memorable importance. Burton as *Captain Cuttle*; Blake as the *Last Man*; Lysander Thompson as *Bob Tyke*; the elder Wallack as *Reuben Glenroy*; the elder Charles Walcot as *Touchstone*; the elder Hackett as *Monsieur Tonson* and *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant*; John Nickinson as *Haversac*; E. L. Davenport as *William*; John E. Owens as *Caleb Plummer* and *Doctor Pangloss*; James W. Wallack, Jr., as the *King of the Commons*; Lester Wallack as *Charles Surface*, *Harry Dornton*, and *Sir Oswin Mortland*; John Sefton as *Crack*, *Jemmy Twitcher*, and *Silky*; William Warren as *Sir Peter Teazle*; John Gilbert as *Mr. Dornton*, *Lord Ogleby*, *Mr. Oakley*, *Sir Anthony Absolute*, and *Master Walter*; Charles Fisher as *Goldfinch* and *Nicholas*

## A PREFATORY NOTE

*Rue*; Henry Placide as *Grandfather Whitehead* and *Corporal Cartouche*; Charles Wheatleigh as *Triplet*; Charles W. Coul-dock as *Luke Fielding*; John Brougham as *Dazzle*; Barney Williams in "The Irish Lion"; and W. J. Florence in "The Irish Emigrant"—these performances, and many more like these, each perfect in its way and all admirable, once were things of every-day occurrence, and superiority was so common that it often passed unnoticed. Those were the days when Mr. Stoddart came upon the scene, and such were some of the competitors among whom he made his way and held his place.

No thoughtful student of history will indulge in wholesale depreciation of the present as contrasted with the past, for, in some material particulars, the world is more prosperous and comfortable to-day than it ever was before; but certainly it is true that, in acting as well as in literature, fine and substantial things—things having in them the grandeur of noble truth and the fire of genial passion—were

---

## A PREFATORY NOTE

more frequent forty or fifty years ago than they are now. The actor of the old school, as he is commonly called, was an actor thoroughly grounded in his profession, trained by experience, equipped at all points, able to do many things well and some things brilliantly, and, whatever may have been his defects, solid and stable in character, moderate in self-confidence, and usually modest in the conduct of life. To that type of actor the influences of the older time were tributary, for it was a time of more staid ideas and more ceremonious manners than are now prevalent, a time of far less fever and of far more repose. Mr. Stoddart, to those observers whose fortune it has been to view the stage from the inside, has ever been conspicuous for unpretending worth, unfailing geniality, sweetness of temperament, gentleness of bearing, probity of conduct, and patient and thorough performance of duty. His congenital inheritance was fortunate, and his early surroundings favored the development of such a character; for the stage in Scot-

## A PREFATORY NOTE

land, where he passed his youth and had his novitiate, was a different institution from what it is now—as anybody can see who will read Jackson's "History" and such dramatic memoirs as Galt's "Lives" and Bernard's "Reminiscences." The life of an actor in those days had to be one of economy, frugality, toil, and self-denial, and it was only to the great lights of the profession—and not always to them—that any social consideration was accorded. The Kemble period in Great Britain had just passed away, and the Macready period was just coming in, when Mr. Stoddart (now in his seventy-fifth year) began his apprenticeship to acting. The eccentric Mr. Alexander—he who placed his own bust between those of Shakspere and Garrick in the front of his Glasgow theater, and whose elaborate tomb, with its theatrical drop-curtain, can be seen in the Glasgow necropolis—was the principal manager in Scotland, and "stars" such as Murray, Farren, and Munden were roaming over the land. Mr. Stoddart, born at Barnsley, Yorkshire,

## A PREFATORY NOTE

England, October 13, 1827, was early trained to the theater by his father, a good actor and a good man, and up to his twenty-seventh year, when he emigrated to America, was rigidly schooled in the study and practice of his art at many places in the British Kingdom, particularly in the northern towns of Scotland, in Yorkshire, and in Liverpool. In 1854 he crossed the sea, and on September 7 of that year he appeared at Wallack's Theater, beginning a career before the American public that has lasted close on half a century and been steadily attended with honorable renown. Phases and associations of that career are recorded in this book, and the reader will find it equally an exposition of character and a document in theatrical history.

Theatrical memoirs in general are dreary compilations, abounding in dates and trivialities, and when they are autobiographical they are commonly prodigious as ebullitions of overweening egotism. It is seldom that an old actor, writing about the past, records anything of value

## A PREFATORY NOTE

concerning his contemporaries, or anything calculated to cast a light upon any interesting aspect of the times through which he has lived. Cibber's book "The Apology" remains unrivaled for vital portraiture of fine and famous persons with whom he was associated. The elder Bernard's book is excellent for authentic chronicles and sprightly anecdote. Jefferson's book, in our own time, is exceptional for spontaneous manifestation of the writer's sympathetic temperament, sweet, playful humor, and philosophic husbandry of peace and happiness amid the vicissitudes of a turbulent age. But most of the numerous and frivolous writings of actors could well be spared. The memoirs that the world needs, for its guidance and help, are those of the men and women who are genuine, who have borne the burden and heat of the day, who have helped to strengthen and beautify the passing life of their generation, and who write, not from vanity, but from the impulse of kindness and service. Mr. Stoddart was not easily persuaded to give

## A PREFATORY NOTE

these reminiscences, and although wishful to heed the request of his children,—that he would make for them, as a precious legacy, some account of his life,—it was not till strongly urged by the present writer that he consented to undertake this task. Such persuasion was warranted, for no actor was ever more genuine than Mr. Stoddart, and no professional life was ever more exemplary than his of the admirable virtues of perseverance, self-denial, sincerity, fidelity, purity, and truth. The counsel upon which the veteran finally acted was that he should write freely, as if in a letter to an old friend, whatever of the past he might happen to remember; and in so writing he has made old days to live again, and voices to speak once more that have long been silent, and faces to smile upon us that have long been cold.

In deference to Mr. Stoddart's judgment and in compliance with his desire these words are written to introduce his book—a book which really requires no introduction, and to which no indorse-

## A PREFATORY NOTE

ment can impart a greater than its intrinsic value. It is the cursory record of a good life, the natural expression of a manly and lovable character, and in some ways it is an illuminative side-light upon an old theatrical period—a time of rare interest to those who watch the dramatic movement in literature and society, and trace the action and reaction of civilization and the stage. It is fortunate that the work of writing this record was not too long deferred. In two instances—that of George Holland and that of John Brougham—the present writer earnestly and often urged the need and the fair occasion of an autobiography, and at last both those veterans attempted the labor; but Holland had postponed the effort till he was too old to make it, producing only a trivial fragment of less than a hundred pages; and Brougham, when he began to write, was so ill that he could produce only a few chapters—a mere beginning to what might have been the dramatic chronicle of half a century, teeming with brilliant men and

## A PREFATORY NOTE

women and opulent with feeling and mirth. Mr. Stoddart's youthful spirit, buoyant and genial, serves him now, in the evening gray, as readily and as amply as it did in the morning gold, and his memoir has been written with spontaneous earnestness, simple candor, and homelike grace. Much of it is in outline ; but sometimes, as in a poem by Heine or a landscape by Corot, the outline is suggestive of the complete painting ; and no part of it is tedious. In his writing, as in his acting, it is the sketch that is achieved rather than the elaborate fabric of complex art. One of this comedian's most representative triumphs on the stage was gained in Dion Boucicault's play of "The Long Strike," as the old lawyer, *Mr. Moneypenny*, a man outwardly crabbed but inwardly tender, comic in his garb of morose selfishness but winning in his abundant humanity ; and whoever saw that performance (first given many years ago at Laura Keene's Theater) saw the "picture in little" of those attributes of the actor that have made him great ; for

## A PREFATORY NOTE

greatness in dramatic art, meaning the summit of excellence in interpretative expression, is simplicity, and of simplicity Mr. Stoddart possesses the absolute command, touching equally the springs of humor and pathos, winning affection as well as admiration, and thus fulfilling the best purpose of all art, which is to bless human life with the gracious memory that makes it calm and the noble incentive that makes it beautiful.

MENTONE, CALIFORNIA,  
August 10, 1902.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<small>FACING PAGE</small>
J. H. Stoddart . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From a photograph by Jansen, Buffalo.	
Charles Fisher . . . . .	8
From a photograph by Sarony.	
J. B. Buckstone . . . . .	16
From an engraving.	
Charlotte Cushman . . . . .	24
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Charles James Mathews, Jr., as <i>George Rattleton</i> . . . . .	32
From an engraving by G. Adcock from the painting by R. W. Buss.	
James H. Stoddart, Sr. . . . .	40
From a photograph.	
Playbill of Royal Amphitheater, Liverpool, Wednesday, September 28, 1853	48
Playbill of New Adelphi Theater, Islington, Wednesday, July 26, 1865 . . .	56
Playbill of Theater Royal, Covent Garden, Monday, October 24, 1814 . . .	64
James W. Wallack . . . . .	72
From a lithograph.	

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

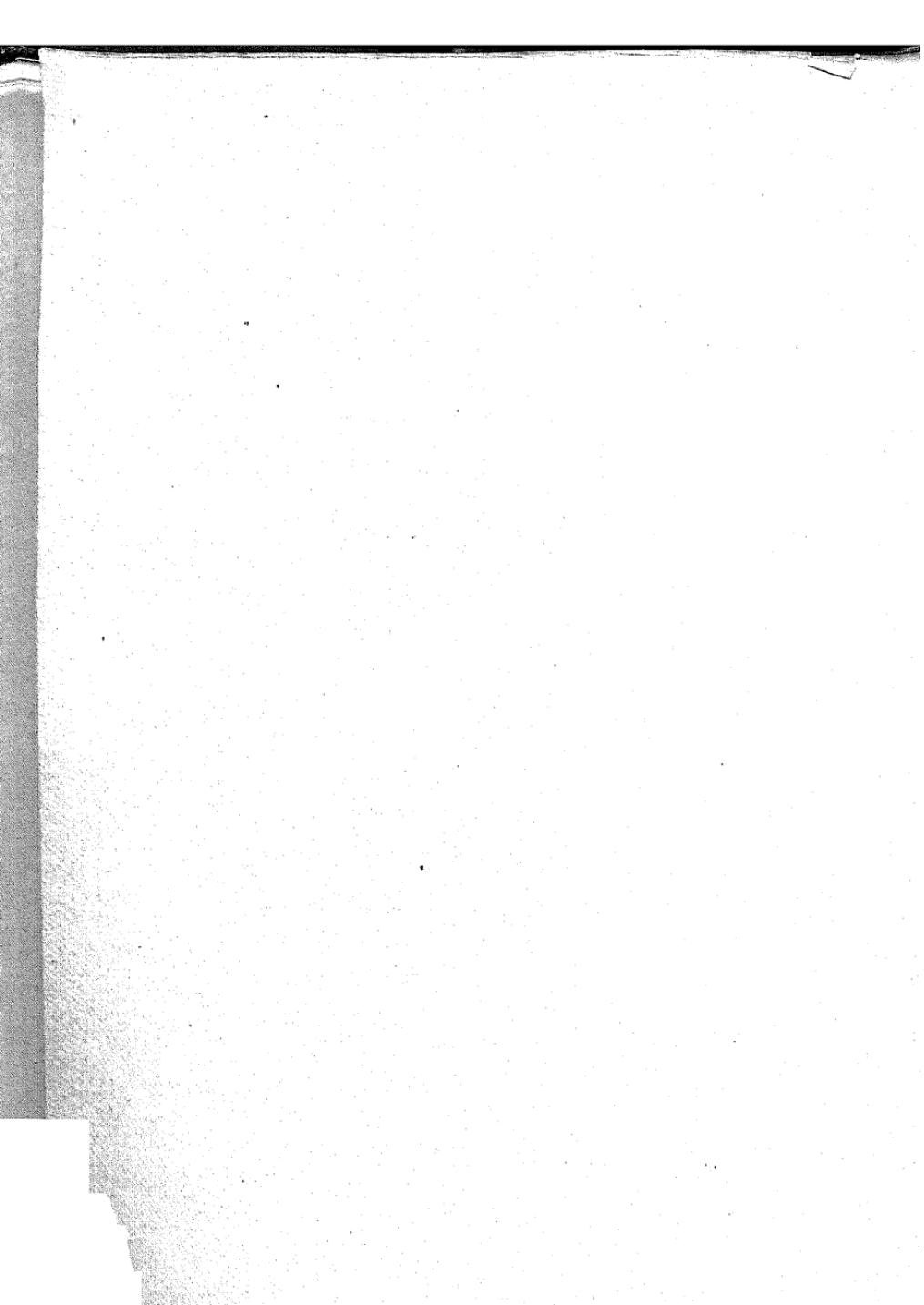
	FACING PAGE
John Brougham . . . . .	80
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Mary Taylor . . . . .	88
From a daguerreotype.	
George Holland . . . . .	92
From a photograph by Gurney.	
John T. Raymond . . . . .	96
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Joseph Jefferson . . . . .	100
From a photograph by Houseworth.	
Mrs. J. H. Stoddart in "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife" . . . . .	104
From a photograph.	
Agnes Robertson (Mrs. Boucicault) . . . . .	108
From a photograph by J. Gurney & Son.	
Edwin Booth . . . . .	116
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Frank Chanfrau . . . . .	124
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Playbill of Olympic Theater, New York, Monday, May 15, 1848 . . . . .	128
Laura Keene . . . . .	132
From a photograph.	
William Mitchell . . . . .	136
From an etching.	
Playbill of Olympic Theater, New York, Tuesday, January 12, 1864. . . . .	140
Mr. Stoddart as <i>Moneypenny</i> . . . . .	144
From a photograph by F. W. Bacon.	

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
John Gilbert . . . . .	148
From a photograph by Brady.	
Lester Wallack . . . . .	156
From a photograph by Falk.	
Mrs. Vernon . . . . .	164
From a photograph by J. Gurney & Son.	
Charles R. Thorne, Jr., as <i>Count De Vernay</i> in "Rose Michel" . . . . .	172
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Henry James Montague . . . . .	176
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Charles Coghlan . . . . .	184
From a photograph by Falk.	
John Parselle . . . . .	196
From a photograph by Marc & Schlum.	
Sara Jewett . . . . .	204
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Dion Boucicault . . . . .	216
From a photograph by Bradley & Rulofson.	
Mrs. John Wood . . . . .	224
From a photograph by Sarony.	
Charles L. Harris as <i>Squire Tucker</i> in "Alabama" . . . . .	232
From a photograph by Thors.	
C. W. Coulcock . . . . .	236
From a photograph taken December, 1891, by J. F. Ryder, Cleveland, Ohio.	
A. M. Palmer . . . . .	240
From a photograph by Falk.	



THE RECOLLECTIONS  
OF A PLAYER



---

## THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER



IT was on the thirteenth day of October, 1827, in the town of Black Barnsley, Yorkshire, England, that I made my first appearance on this world's stage. My father, although not theatrically connected, having been brought up on a farm, became in after-time a well-known and, I think, a very fine actor. A Scottish nobleman, the Earl of Hopetoun, had an estate some distance from Moffat, in the parish of Johnstone, Scotland. He numbered among his tenant farmers many Stoddarts, and my father could lay claim to relationship with almost all of them. He, however, did not seem to fancy milking cows and following the plow, and so he made his

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

way to Glasgow, where he was apprenticed for seven years to learn the carpenter's trade. In those days a person was deemed fortunate who had learned a good trade. My father became a constant frequenter of the theater, and in a short time he was thoroughly stage-struck. He joined an amateur theatrical association, and, after having served his apprenticeship, went to England, where he succeeded in getting an engagement in a regular theater. He remained, to the end of his days, an actor.

There were at that time, in England, routes known as "theatrical circuits"—among them the Huggins and Clark, the Fisher, and the Robertson circuit. Each of these consisted of about four country towns, and three months were spent in each. Salaries were small, but the principal performers had a benefit in each town; and as actors were employed the year round, and played only three nights a week, it was far from being an uncomfortable sort of life. On the non-play nights the actors would meet their friends—and

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

they had many—at some country tavern, and there enjoy themselves in telling stories, singing songs, and smoking their long clay pipes, the barmaid meanwhile frequently renewing their mugs of ale.

It was in the Yorkshire circuit, managed by Huggins and Clark, that my father first made his professional bow, and it was there also that he first met my mother, Mary Pierce. Thomas Pierce, her father, familiarly known by the diminutive "Tommy," had, with his daughter Mary, been associated with the Yorkshire circuit for many years; and in the four towns annually visited old "Tommy" Pierce was as well known as any native inhabitant. He passed nearly all his life in the Yorkshire circuit, amusing a simple lot of people, and was much respected. I suppose one of these circuit companies would now be regarded as a lot of barn-stormers; but those actors were happy, contented, and respected people, and in the towns they visited yearly had hosts of expectant friends to meet and welcome them.

The Fisher circuit was thought to offer

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

a desirable situation, it being managed by the parents of my old friend Charles Fisher. He and I dressed together for a number of years at Wallack's Theater (the Thirteenth Street house), and he would often speak of those early days when he used to play the fiddle in the orchestra of his father's company, and, having dressed for his part beforehand, would throw a cloak over his costume and take his place with the band, and then, after the overture was ended, return to the stage and his part.

While we were at Wallack's his great wish was, he said, to return to the place of his birth and pass the evening of his days where, years before, he had been so happy. He did return, and I was told he found everything so changed, so unlike what he had expected, that he came back to America after a short visit, and not long afterward he died in New York, June 11, 1891. Mr. Joseph Jefferson, Mr. Charles W. Coulcock, and I saw him laid to rest. I had ample opportunity of knowing Fisher intimately, and I regarded it

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

as a great privilege to be so closely associated with one so talented, so modest, and so good. Every one loved Charles Fisher.

The Robertson circuit was thought to be of more importance than the others mentioned. It certainly produced actors of great distinction in Mr. Tom Robertson the dramatist and his talented sister Miss Madge Robertson, now Mrs. Kendal.

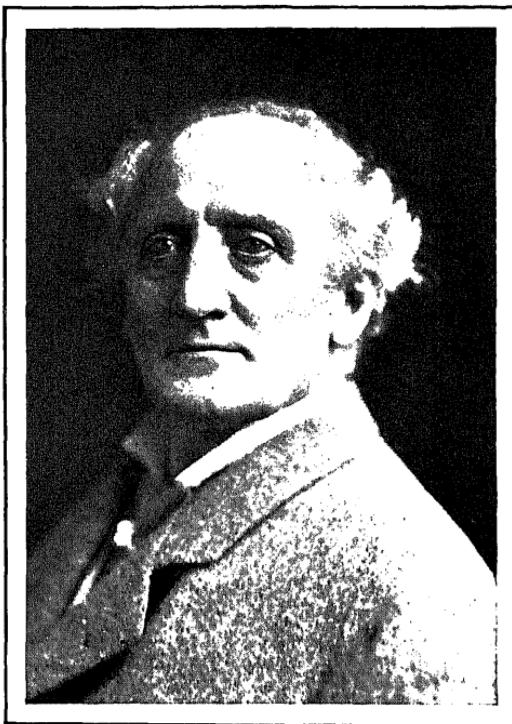
My father, having married Miss Mary Pierce, thought it prudent to seek his fortune in some wider field than the Yorkshire circuit, and he succeeded in procuring an engagement for himself and wife in Manchester. They also played in Liverpool, Newcastle, Dublin, and Belfast, and in most of the smaller towns of England. Time brought them a large family, seven boys and three girls. The girls and two boys died in infancy, leaving George, James, Robert, Richard, and Benjamin, all of whom attained to manhood and adopted the stage as a profession, each in his time playing many parts. For years we wandered through the small English towns, encountering the ups and downs of theatri-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

cal life, and being far oftener down than up. Alas ! all now are dead, leaving the writer, at seventy-four, only the remembrance of loving brothers and of affectionate parents, who, amid all their struggles and hardships, ever tried to secure the comfort and happiness of their boys—parents who on many occasions deprived themselves of common necessities in order that their lads might have all the more.

I often think of the days when we were all “wee chaps” tramping through England and Scotland, scantily clothed, possessed of huge appetites, many times lacking the means to appease them ; and yet those days stand out as among the happiest of my life. What, indeed, would I not give to recall them ?

Mr. John Henry Alexander, or “old Alec,” as the boys in Glasgow were wont to call him, was the most eccentric character known to the theatrical profession. No one who had not seen them would believe the extraordinary things that occurred under his management. The appearance of the man was comic. His nose



Charles Fisher.



---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and chin nearly met. His voice, once heard, could never be forgotten, or mistaken for that of any other person. If he appeared in the street he was "the observed of all observers." He was a capital actor of Scotch parts, and very funny in all that he did. His style being so marked, so peculiarly his own, there was never any mistaking the man. Alec began his theatrical career in the most humble way. He had, however, wonderful perseverance and energy. His first performances in Glasgow were given in a loft. Although he was laughed at and quizzed, nothing could daunt him. He held his own, and became not only the manager but the proprietor of the most gorgeous theater outside of London. It was somewhat flamboyant in decoration, but, in its way, an ornament to Dunlop Street, where it was situated. Few visitors to Glasgow would leave the city without taking a 'peep at Alec and his theater. There he played all sorts of parts, including tragedy, comedy, burlesque, and farce, and he even sang comic songs and danced sailors' hornpipes

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

between the pieces. No one would believe that a man could make himself so ridiculous who had not actually seen Alexander. He used to play *William* in "Black-eyed Susan," and he always danced a hornpipe—the boys in the gallery crying the while, "Go it, Alec!" and whistling "Jack 's the Lad," or bawling, "Gie us Alec's step!" Every one knew Alec's step and always vociferously applauded it, compelling him to repeat the dance several times. He had no idea of dancing, but, as he passed the leader of the orchestra, he would shout to him, "Quicker, quicker! for I 'm around the stage like lightning!" the members of the band being scarcely able to control their laughter. The exterior of his theater was handsome. Three statues, well executed, as large as life, were placed in front, at an elevation. Shakspere was in the center, Garrick on one side, and Alexander himself on the other. In pointing to them Alec would say: "There, sir, is Shakspere; there is Garrick; and there is John Henry Alexander—as great a man in his way as any of them."

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

My father and Alexander had been boys together, and, as fellow-apprentices, had "served their time" in Glasgow, and were close companions. They had also entered the theatrical profession in the same year. Alexander prospered; my father did not. We were getting on so badly in England, and our prospects were so dark, that a letter was at last sent to Scotland, applying to Alexander for an engagement. His reply was awaited with anxiety, as my father had made us understand that Alexander and himself had been comrades, having even stood together at the theater doors, begging pass-out checks, in order to get a glimpse of the much-desired play. Later they had belonged to the same amateur club. My father was sure, therefore, that his old friend would be glad to engage both my mother and himself. My mother felt that, as Alexander was a great man now, he might have forgotten his boy friend, and therefore she was not so sanguine. Poor mother generally looked on the dark side of things, while my father was extravagantly optimistic.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

One day my brother George came running into the house with a letter, shouting, "It is from Glasgow, from Alexander." And so it proved to be. It was a friendly letter saying that the writer would be glad to receive my father, but could not, at present, avail himself of my mother's services. "Never mind, Mary," said my father; "my salary will keep the pot boiling, and you will be fully employed attending to the youngsters."

We hurriedly packed and made arrangements for immediate flight. A bargain was struck with the carrier, who provided a common means of conveyance in those days, often used by persons not over well-to-do. The carrier's wagon had a large canvas cover to protect passengers from bad weather, and also plenty of straw inside to keep all dry and warm. We laid in a basket of provisions, and, bundling in, we started. The carrier's wagon was not to be despised, if a traveler could not afford to take passage in the mail-coach. It seemed to me that the journey occupied almost a week. We arrived in Glasgow

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

in due course, and sought Alexander, who seemed very glad to see us. My father's salary was fixed at two pounds per week, not a large sum for the needs of so large a family, but when my father mentioned the amount we all thought it a fortune. Alexander had again expressed his regret that he had nothing to offer my mother, but, remembering "auld lang syne," and wishing to help father, he proposed to engage the young masters Stoddart, whom, he said, he would use as frequently as the plays would permit, for children's parts, pages, etc. So it was arranged that, irrespective of age, we should each receive one shilling a performance when we acted speaking parts, and sixpence when we appeared in silent ones.

The varied and extensive repertory of my brothers and myself under this shilling and six-penny arrangement would scarcely be credited. When we entered on our career with Alexander our tender years confined us to children's parts, but, with advance of time, we were put on in the tragedies as pages, in the nautical.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

pieces as young sailors, and in the melodramas my brother George and I, when we had reached the age of ten and eight respectively, were to be seen as bloodthirsty young ruffians, wearing our own light hair, but with villainous black beards,—done in cork, frequently by Mr. Alexander himself,—fighting fierce combats at the rear of the stage. Alexander would say, “There, that will do; now go along. There are *young ruffians*, you know, as well as *old ruffians*.” We got to be known as well as Alexander himself by the patrons of the theater, and the newspapers would often refer to us as “Alec’s two young heroes.”

I cannot remember the first appearance of my brother George, but I vividly recollect my own. I was five years old, and was taken on to represent the child of *Martin Haywood* in Douglas Jerrold’s drama of “The Rent Day.” In the last scene, where *Crumbs*, played by my father, seizes *Martin’s* goods and chattels, and is about to turn him out of doors, I became fearfully excited; and when *Martin*, my stage father, began berating *Crumbs*, the real author of

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

my being, I could stand it no longer. I ran from *Martin*, and clung wildly to old *Crumbs*. I had been announced as "Master Stoddart, five years old; his first appearance on any stage," so that my identity and my relationship to *Crumbs* were known to the public. The audience yelled with delight, and the conclusion of the act was, of course, completely upset. My *début*, therefore, proved highly injurious to my prospects, for, for some time afterward, when other children were required, Alexander would say to my father : "Stoddart, don't bring the 'Rent Day' boy."

I made a second appearance later, in "Macbeth." I was cast for one of the apparitions. Macready was playing the great Thane. I had to say :

Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth, beware Macduff!  
Beware the Thane of Fife! dismiss me: enough!

I was nervous, but having upset things in "The Rent Day" on my first appearance, I thought it absolutely necessary for my future well-being that, this time, I should convince Mr. Alexander of my sta-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

bility. I stood at the wings watching Macready. He was so particular that everybody dreaded him. No one dared to move or make the slightest noise behind the scenes. I remember that young Mr. Cathcart on one occasion, having to deliver a message to him, extended his right hand in doing it ; whereupon Mr. Macready immediately took him to task, saying : "No, no, sir ; don't do that. No action, sir, no action. Keep your hands down by your sides, and look me in the eye ; but no action."

This strict discipline had a tendency to confuse me, and I wished my part of the rehearsal over. I made my way under the stage and found the step-ladder by which I was to reach the caldron. The witches were stirring something in it with their sticks. I kept repeating my lines, fearful that I should forget them. At last my time came to appear. I popped my head through the caldron and heard my cue. One of the witches says :

He knows thy thought :  
Hear his speech, but say thou naught.



John Keats



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

I was trembling like a leaf, but I began : “Muckbeth, Muckbeth.” Mr. Macready instantly interrupted me : “Oh, no, no, young man ; not Muck, not Muck. Go on, sir ; try again.” I said once more, “Muckbeth.” “Oh, no, no ! Mack, Mack, Mack ! D—— it, can’t you say Macbeth ?” At this moment Mr. Alexander kindly came to my rescue. “I think, Mr. Macready,” he said, “you will find the boy all right at night. Besides,” he added, “‘Macbeth’ is a Scotch piece, and a little of the Scotch dialect may not be altogether out of place.” Alexander had a very broad accent himself. I was at last allowed to proceed in my own way, but I do not remember whether I finally said “Muck” or “Mack.”

Nearly all the important star actors of the time came down from London and played engagements with Alexander. Among them were Helen Faueit, Charles Mathews, Mme. Vestris, Tyrone Power, the great Irish comedian, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, Benjamin Webster, Mme. Celeste, J. B. Buckstone, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Edwin Forrest, and Charlotte Cushman.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Miss Glyn, who was associated with Mr. Phelps at Sadlers Wells, London, was a favorite in Edinburgh and Glasgow. She was Scotch, and had a broad Scotch accent, and she was abnormally tall. My brother George played with her in Liverpool, and on one occasion had an important scene to act with her. She towered above him. When she saw him at rehearsal she addressed him thus : "Dear, dear young man, you 're verra short ; could ye no stand on your taes ?"

Charlotte Cushman began in "Guy Mannering." Although it was not a novelty in Glasgow, but a stock piece, played season after season, when her *Meg Merrilies* was once made known to the Glasgow theater-going public, not only were the houses packed, but Dunlop Street was thronged with people anxious to witness her performance, and her *Meg Merrilies* became the talk of the town. I had the honor of playing the *Gypsy Boy* with her, and as long as I live I shall remember her first entrance, and her death at the end of the piece. After being shot she

---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

exclaims, while looking in *Henry Bethune's* face, "Shout, men. Shout, and acknowledge him heir of Ellangowan!" With the first shout she raised herself partly up ; with the second to her full height ; and with the third shout she fell all of a heap on the stage, looking more like a bundle of old rags than a human being. I certainly think it was the most effectively dramatic piece of business I have ever seen. On another occasion she played *Rosalind* in "As You Like It," and Mr. Alexander's company never being over-numerous, I was cast for the part of *Jacques Dubois*. The night before its production I was a little doubtful as to whether I could commit it to memory ; but as it meant a shilling instead of sixpence, I undertook it, walking the floor half the night trying to memorize my lines. The part consists of only one speech, but that is a long and most important one occurring at the end of the play. In the morning I could repeat it—at rehearsal it had left me. The property-man of the theater said he had played the part, so, much to my mental

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

relief and my pecuniary loss, I was told that *I* would not be needed. The property-man went on that night, but the next morning Miss Cushman sent for me and said, "That man got through with the speech last night, but spoke it in such a villainous manner that I don't want a repetition of *him*, if I can avoid it; I know blank verse needs to dwell some time in the memory. Let me hear if you *now* remember the lines." I repeated the speech without a mistake, and Miss Cushman in consequence gave directions that the property-man should doff his garment and that *I* should don it. I was told afterward that *I* spoke the much-dreaded speech well. Even the gentleman whom *I* had supplanted assured me *I* was "all right," and related to me the trouble *he* had to get hold of the words. "The first time I did it," said he, "I kept on repeating the words, 'I am the second son of old Sir Roland,' for I could n't for the life of me think of the rest of my speech, and at last, being completely dumfounded, I ex-

---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

claimed, 'Oh, why the devil did Sir Roland ever have a second son!' And I think the audience heard it."

Mr. Alexander, at this time a man over fifty years of age, played all sorts of parts, but he was essentially a low comedian. His personality was never left in doubt, and if he had a line or two to speak before making his entrance, they would say in front: "Here comes old Alec." Miss Jean Davenport, afterward Mrs. General Lander, who played many star engagements in Glasgow, on one occasion acted *Juliet* to the *Romeo* of Alexander. This proved too much for the Glasgow people to endure. Hand-bills were distributed throughout the city, which read: "Murder at the Theater Royal! Alexander as *Romeo*." The populace came armed with clubs, sticks, etc., and seldom, I suppose, was a scene like it ever witnessed in a theater. When *Romeo* made his first appearance the spectators hooted, yelled, and shouted, "Go home, Alec!" My father played *Friar Laurence*. When he said,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

"Come forth, thou desperate man" (referring to *Romeo*), there was a roar. After *Romeo's* speech,

Fall upon the ground as I do now,  
Taking the measure of an unmade grave,

Alexander fell in such a comic manner that the audience was convulsed. They whistled, pounded the floor with their sticks, and cat-called until *Romeo* could stand it no longer. He rose up from his prone position, came down to the foot-lights, and spoke as follows: "Ladies and gentlemen." [A voice from the gallery: "Oh, go home, Alec."] "I 'll give five pounds," said Alexander, "if some one will point out that blackguard in the gallery." [Another voice: "It was me, Alec."] "Hold your tongue," roared Alexander, "and don't incriminate yourself. Ladies and gentlemen, I have built you a beautiful theater." [Yells.] "I know I am not so young as I was." [No, no, and roars of laughter.] "But, thank God, I can play the part." At this there was a general row, and Alexander went back

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

to his position, again stretching himself upon the stage. The disturbance continued throughout the evening.

I played *Romeo*'s page, and had to follow him on in the last scene, when he visits the tomb of the Capulets. When Alexander appeared in his black costume it was the signal for another outburst of merriment, and when I made my entrance, with a crowbar and a lighted torch, they howled. They were more respectful while *Juliet* was on the stage, but during *Romeo*'s death scene the climax of derisive joy was reached.

When my father and I were leaving the theater after the performance, we saw a crowd in front of the building, with Alexander in their center, sword in hand, endeavoring, as he said, to protect his property from injury at the hands of a lot of "blackguard ruffians." We hurried home. Next morning it was discovered that during the uproar some one had managed to find his way to the roof of the theater and had given one side of the face of Alexander's statue a liberal coat of whitewash. A re-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ward of five pounds was offered for the apprehension of the culprit, but he was never discovered.

As I grew older I began to think that some other occupation would be more congenial to me. After the Glasgow season a company was formed to try their luck in Greenock, a sort of sharing scheme, of which my father became the manager. After the running expenses were deducted, the remainder was divided according to the relative positions held by the actors, the principals, of course, receiving a larger share than the minor members.

In those days Greenock was a great shipping-port. All the heavier vessels lay there, as the Clyde was not sufficiently deep to allow them to go up to Glasgow. I used to watch the ships come in and out, and, seeing the sailors spend their money freely ashore, I thought that seafaring would be an ideal life, and resolved to adopt it. I had not a good appearance for the character. I was thin and very pale. My parents thought I was quite unsuited for such a life, and naturally



Charlotte Cushman.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

they objected ; but I became infatuated with the idea. I had a sympathizing land-lady, who looked upon the theater as a pit of iniquity, and in order, as she said, to redeem me, did her utmost to try to obtain for me my heart's desire, to ship on board some vessel. She wandered with me from shipping-office to shipping-office, and took me on board all sorts of craft, interviewing captains and mates, but all to no purpose ; and despite her explanation that I was the son of a "play-actor," and that she was trying to get me out of "sic a disreputable calling," she could not succeed in gaining for me the opportunity to become a "jolly Jack Tar." Her last application settled the business, and she vowed she would have nothing more to do with it. After much exertion, climbing over two vessels to reach a third that lay alongside, we succeeded in obtaining an interview with the captain. She began with him as she had done with the others. "Here," said she, "is a poor laddie who is the son of a play-actor, and he very properly objects to following his father's wicked

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and disreputable trade, and he wants to be a sailor. Do you think you could give him a job?"

The captain looked at my landlady and then at me. "Are you his mither?" "No," she said; "no exactly his mither—just a friend."

"Woman," said the captain, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself to try and send a boy like that to sea. He'd be dead before we got through half the voyage. Take him home and make a tailor of him. Get ashore, get ashore." My landlady beat a hasty retreat, saying as she went: "You must just be a play-actor all your days. *I'm* no going to fash ma head wi' ye ony more." And she did n't.

I was still bent on going to sea. It so happened that my father appointed me to take checks at the gallery door of the theater, and in that capacity I met many sailors, and I became intimate with one, to whom I related all my troubles—my great wish to become a sailor, and my difficulty in getting shipped. He told me he was an apprentice on board of a vessel about

---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

to start on a trading voyage to the West Indies, not to return to Greenock for three years. He said that if I liked to stow away, he would do all he could for me until I became used to the sea. I thanked him and jumped at the chance. He promised to let me know the night before the ship sailed, and to smuggle me on board. The next night he came to the theater and told me they were to haul out very early the next morning. I had my bundle of clothes with me, and after the play I went to the ship with my friend. I had told my brother Bob what I purposed doing, and he had promised to break the news to father and mother. Upon reaching the ship we found a watchman on board, who at first objected to my going into the hold and concealing myself; but after much persuasion I was permitted to descend.

It was midwinter and bitterly cold; but I crawled among a lot of casks and other junk, and, almost frozen, I fell asleep. I do not know how long I slept, but when I awoke the ship was moving, and the motion made me so sick I thought I should

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

have died. I had lost my hat and also my bundle. I heard them on deck talking of letting go the tug. My feelings had undergone a complete revolution, and I was far more anxious to get ashore than ever I had been to come on board. I succeeded in reaching the deck just as the tug was about to leave the ship. The captain, espying me as I was about to jump on board the tug, gave me a kick, shouting, "A stowaway!" I saw the ship with bent sails going rapidly down the Clyde, and I was glad to find our craft returning to port.

The tug, however, instead of going all the way back to Greenock, put in at a small port about twelve miles from there. I had to walk this distance to Greenock, as I had lost my clothes and hat in the hold of the ship, and I had no money. I had eaten nothing since about six o'clock the evening before; and, to make matters worse, my brother Bob, who was to break the news of my departure at home, had told my father a fine story of having seen me on a beautiful ship, with other sailors,

---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

in a handsome suit of sailor-clothes, looking happy, and that the captain had patted me on the back and said : "Ah, ye 'll make a braw wee sailorman." On the top of this information I arrived at home, minus my hat and my clothes, and looking a perfect wreck. They were all, however, glad to see me. My mother began to cry, and my father remarked that I was far better fitted for a stage sailor than for the real article. I believed him, and have never since thought of the sea.

We returned to Glasgow and rejoined Mr. Alexander, passing another season in the same old way. Alexander's wife had a wretched life on account of his peculiarities. She was never out of the theater. She was the wardrobe-keeper, attended to the supers, prompted her husband, who always needed it, and tried to be the peacemaker in all disputes, of which there were many. Alexander often, in the heat of temper, discharged a member of his company who could hardly be spared, and it was then that he would send for his wife and urge her to help him out

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

of his difficulties. "Woman," he would say, "I can't part with that man. If he goes, I'll murder *you*!" Then, poor soul, she would go to the one discharged and persuade him to stay. "Oh, you munna think about leaving," she would say. "Mr. Alexander disna mean half he says. Just see how he abuses *me*." Everybody liked Mrs. Alexander, and frequently would remain with the company on her account.

I recall a unique incident in a performance of "Rob Roy." My brother George and I were playing *Rob's* sons, *Robert* and *Hamish*. There is a scene in which *Nicol Jarvie* and *Francis Osbaldistone* are taken prisoners and marched between a file of Highland soldiers to what is called the "Tramp Chorus." Mrs. Alexander had made up the supers hurriedly, and there was one of the Highlanders, a very tall person, whom the audience singled out from the rest as a butt for its laughter. Mr. Alexander, who was the *Nicol Jarvie*, seeing him endeavor to diminish his height by marching around almost in a

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

sitting posture, admonished him, in a voice that could be heard above the martial music, to "Stand up, sir!" The Highlander did not rise; at which Alexander repeated the command in a louder voice: "Stand up, sir!" This time the Highlander explained: "I canna, Alec, I canna; ma kilt 's ower short."

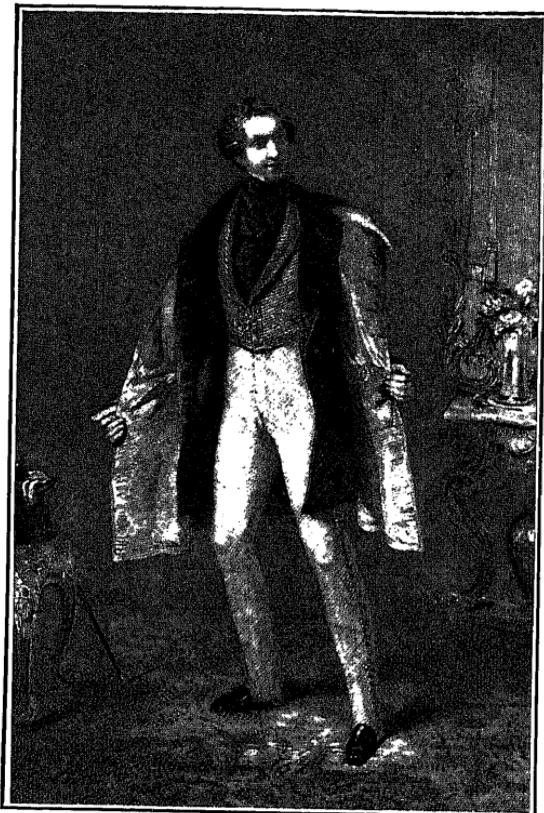
On the same occasion Mr. Charles Loveday, who was so long in America, was the *Captain Thornton* of the cast. He had a cold, and he coughed frequently while speaking; whereupon Alexander unsympathetically drew attention to his illness by saying in an audible aside: "Lord preserve us and deliver us frae this asthmatical army."

Alexander was always careful not to offend my father, who had been with him so long, had such a "good study," and was so well up in all the current plays that he was a most valuable member of the company. There were no type-written parts in those days. An actor had to write out his own part, and was allowed only a certain time in which to do it, having then

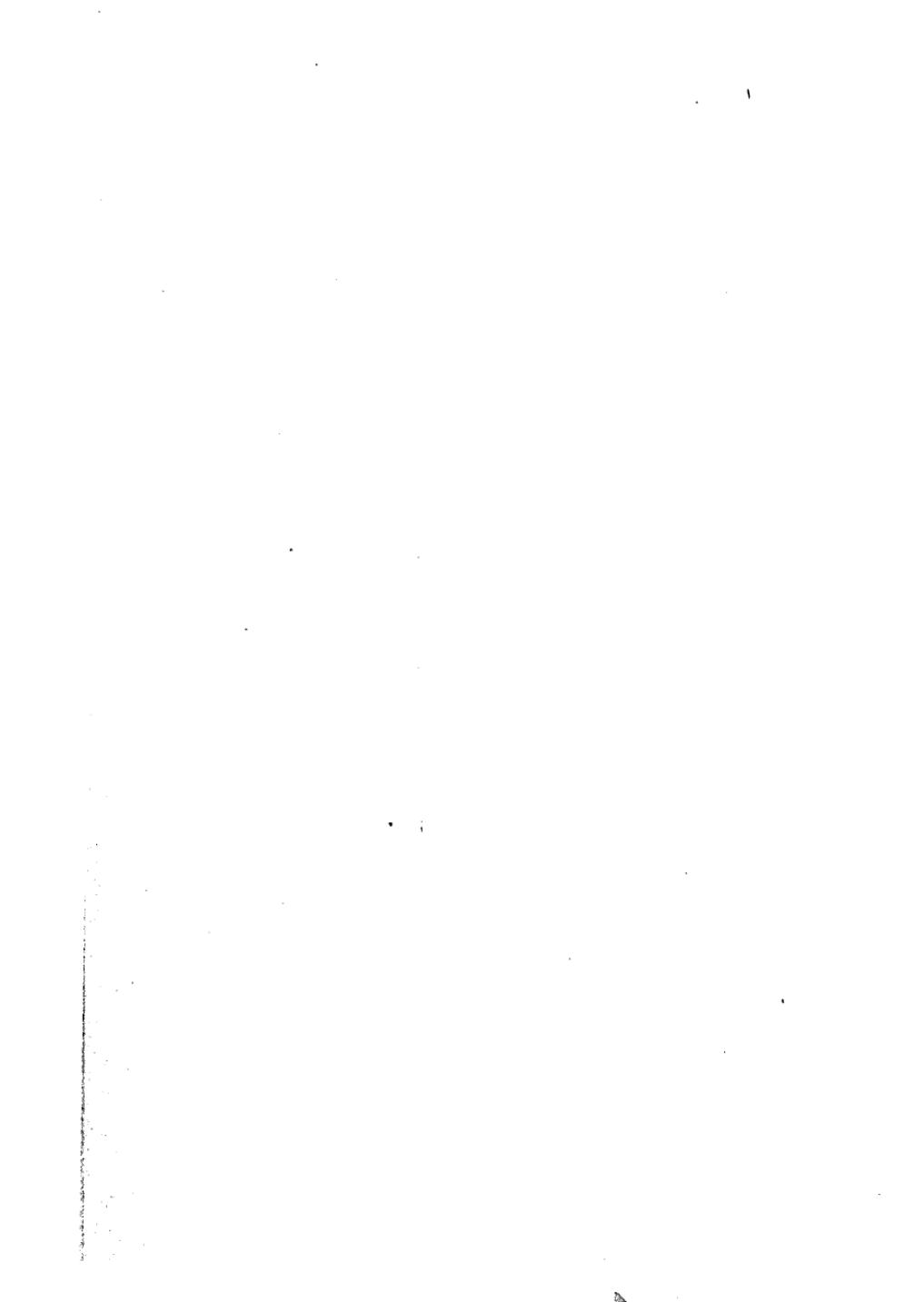
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

to pass the manuscript or play-book on to some other member. Many and many a night, after the performance, when my brothers and I were all in bed, father and mother would be at work on new parts for hours, she reading and he writing. Often poor mother, tired out, would nod over her task and lose her place, saying, "Oh, dear! I have given you the wrong speech." And father would irritably reply, "Confound it! Give me the book and I'll read it myself." But in the same moment he would rise, kiss her, and insist upon her going to bed, finishing the task by himself. Poor mother! God bless her memory! One of the most patient and tender-hearted creatures that ever lived—trying to clothe and provide for her children on so slender an income, and fighting a malady, cancer, that eventually ended her life, and yet so good, so cheerful, always making light of her pain.

My father, night after night, would walk up and down the room, studying long parts for the next night's performance, and sometimes daylight would appear be-



Charles James Mathews, Jr.,  
as *George Rattleton*.



---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

fore he could retire. Again, he would be in the theater until three or four o'clock in the afternoon rehearsing, and then home to repeat the same sort of labor. The work was fearful, and I have since wondered how he ever got through it.

Charles Mathews and Mme. Vestris played an engagement with Alexander one season, and years after Mr. Mathews recalled to me, when we were together at Wallack's, an incident of it. "I shall never forget," said he, "your father, and the terrific work he got through with Alexander in Glasgow. Vestris and I were playing an engagement there, and your father was in all the plays. The entertainment on one occasion consisted of 'The Windmill,' 'The Loan of a Lover,' and 'The Captain of the Watch.' Your father had struggled through the first two at rehearsal. When we came to the last play, 'The Captain of the Watch,' he seemed a little befogged. I said to him: 'Stoddart, do you know this piece, "The Captain of the Watch"?' 'No, sir,' said he, 'I do not.' 'Well,' I explained, 'this

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

old baron that you play is a—well, he is a sort of mysterious old fellow, you know.' I shall never forget your father's expression. He looked at all the parts in his pocket, and then at me, and he said in his droll way: 'Mr. Mathews, you will find the baron d—d mysterious at night.'"

The American tragedian Edwin Forrest followed Mathews at the Theater Royal, and played a very indifferent engagement. He and Alexander were at war all the time. As the business was bad, old Alec cut down the supers to about one half the number Forrest required. Upon Forrest objecting, Alexander justified himself by calling attention to the fact that Macready and other great stars had played at his theater with no greater auxiliary assistance than was offered to Forrest. "You are an ass," said Forrest. "A what?" said Alec. "An ass, an ass!" repeated Forrest. "Sir," replied Alec, "I have built this beautiful temple of the drama; I am its sole proprietor. You, Mr. Forrest, are simply a guest; and, judging from your behavior, a very disagreeable one you are." "Your

---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

guest!" ejaculated Mr. Forrest. "A rat would n't be *your* guest." I suppose both were glad when the engagement ended.

This was about the time when there was so much discussion as to the respective abilities of Forrest and Macready. Forrest attributed his comparative failure in England and Scotland to the alleged hostility of Macready, and likewise to his nationality. The latter was certainly an erroneous plea, for when Miss Charlotte Cushman appeared there her success was as overwhelming as his was indifferent, and this, too, although she was an American of the most pronounced type.

At the end of Alexander's season my father again formed a company and visited some of the small towns of Scotland. The inhabitants of some of those places were not exactly thirsting for dramatic entertainment, and in some of the small towns they knew very little of the legitimate drama. Every school-boy, however, could speak "My name is Norval," etc., so we thought Home's tragedy of "Douglas," in such places, might prove attractive. It

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

was in one of those towns that a most ludicrous incident occurred. We had at the time no posters or other means of advertising, save through the town crier, who was sent around the village in the afternoon announcing the performance of the evening. *Ting-a-ling, ting-a-ling!* Ringing his bell, he cried: "Grand performance in Town hall to-night! Great play of 'Douglas'! Leave early, or ye 'll no get seat!" In spite of this effective and earnest exhortation, the inhabitants did not avail themselves of the chance to enjoy the classic drama, and but few persons in all presented themselves for admission to the theater that evening. This noble band sat huddled together in the front row. Father said that we should give the performance at all events. "Perhaps," he remarked hopefully, "as we progress, others may drop in." But they did n't, which, I think, rather incensed my father; for in one part of the play where he, as the hero, has an impassioned speech, he delivered it as though to a house crowded with enthusiastic admirers.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

“Demons of death! Come, settle on my sword.” Upon hearing this invocation, one of the auditors, becoming alarmed, made for the door. Nothing daunted, father proceeded with great energy : “And to a double slaughter guide it home!” At this the second auditor followed the first. Father, now thoroughly aroused, drew his sword, shouting : “The husband and the lover *both* must die!” The remaining three were now really trembling with fright, and precipitately followed their companions ; but as they reached the door of the hall, father, seeing all was over, quietly sheathed his sword and wished them a polite “Good evening, gentlemen,” and so the performance ended.

The Rev. John Home, the author of this same tragedy, was deposed from the ministry for writing it, so great, in those days, was the prejudice in Scotland against the stage.

My father used to relate an anecdote of a provincial tragedian who, while touring the country, for economy’s sake pressed into service a certain stage-struck individ-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ual for the part of *Catesby* in "Richard III." At rehearsal, the star, who was very eccentric and irascible, frightened this young man almost out of his wits by his method of coaching him. "Come on, sir, as though you lacked breath, and don't hesitate. *Shout* out at the top of your voice your lines, 'My lord, the Duke of Buckingham is taken !' Then, sir, I make a *rush* at you and exclaim, 'Off with his head ! Aha ! So much for Buckingham !' *This* is my *strongest* point in the whole tragedy." *Catesby* pondered all day upon his instructions, and worked himself into such a state of nervous excitement ere the performance began in which he was to make his famous speech that he anticipated his cue by several minutes, and rushed on breathlessly, as he was bidden, and shouted lustily: "My lord, the Duke—" "Get off !" cried *Richard*. "You 're too soon !" The unfortunate young man made a precipitate exit, only to appear again before his cue was given. "My lord, the Duke of Buckingham *is* taken !" *Richard* was now furious at the

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

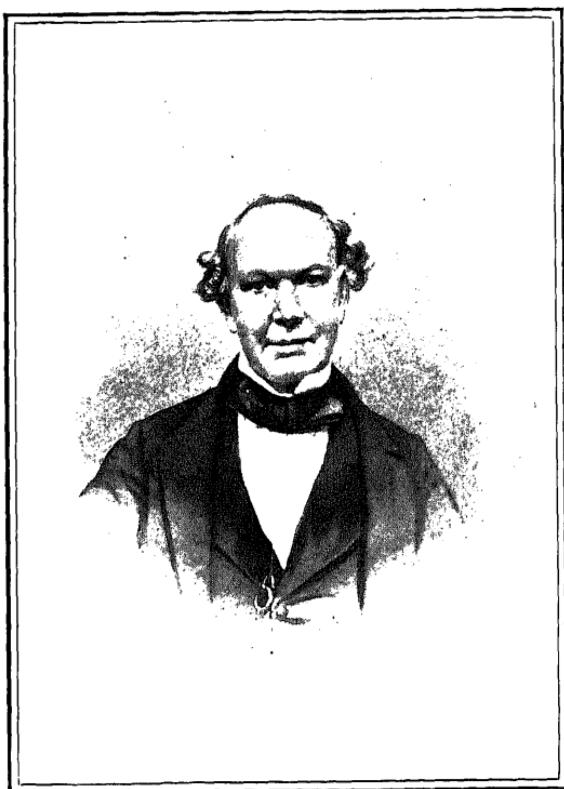
spoiling of his scene, and almost threw the aspirant for histrionic honors from the stage, muttering at the wings : "Will *some* one send this idiot on at the proper time?" When the cue was finally given, the unfortunate young man was pushed on by a stage-hand, with an audible "That 's you—that 's you." The poor fellow by this time had completely lost his head, and roared forth : "My lord, *we have him now sure!*" Needless to say, this was the young gentleman's first and last appearance upon the boards.

Father also told another good story in connection with this same play. It seems that upon one occasion the great George Frederick Cooke was appearing as *Richard*, and the young man cast for *Ratcliff* was very nervous. The tent scene, in the fifth act, gave Cooke, as *Richard*, his great speech. This is at the point where he is supposed to see the ghosts of his victims, and he always became tremendously wrought up over it. As *Ratcliff* enters at the end of the speech, *Richard* starts and shouts : "Who 's there?" *Ratcliff* should

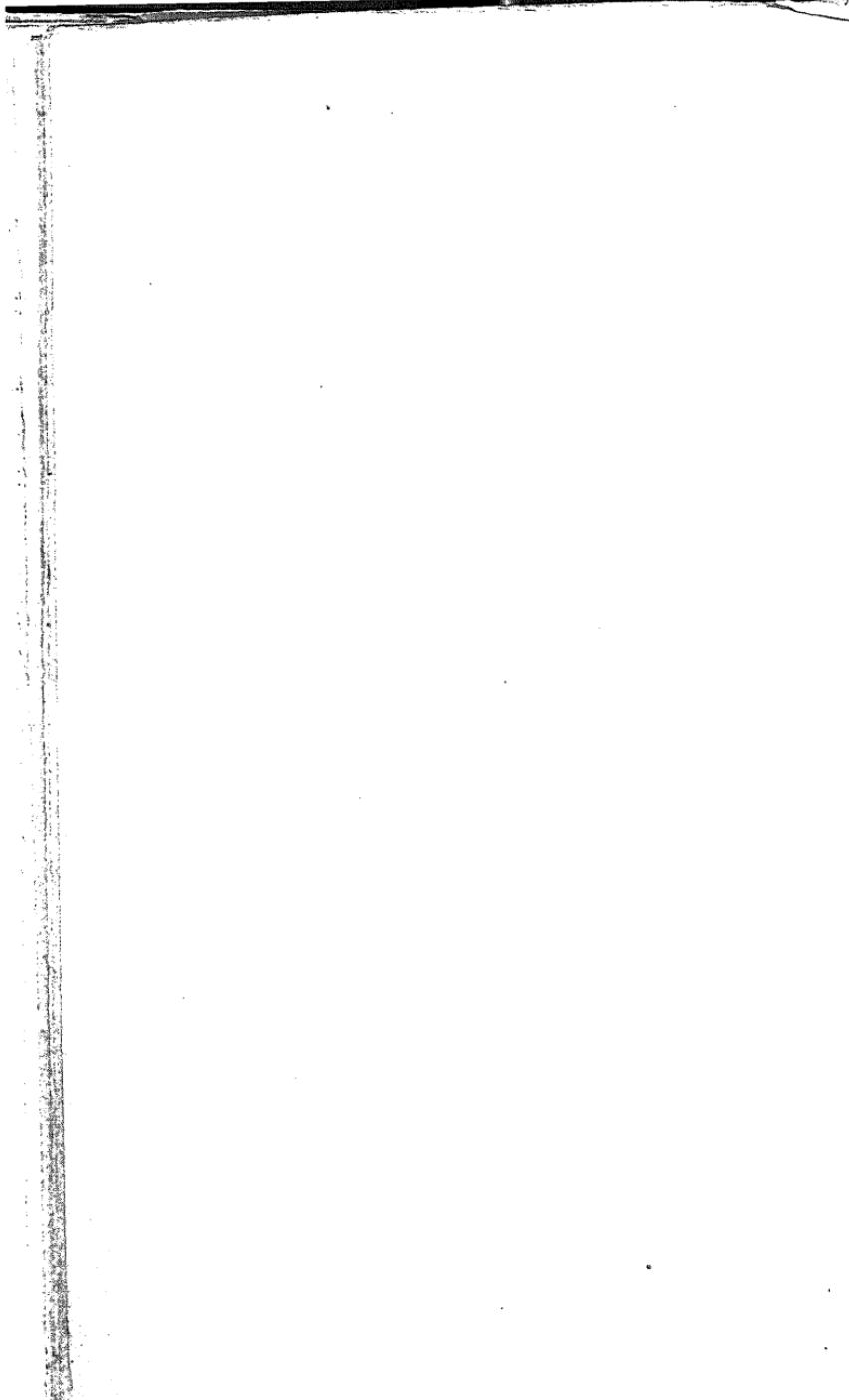
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

answer, "Ratcliff, my lord; 't is I—the early village cock hath twice done salutation to the morn. Your friends are up and buckle on their armor." Cooke's delivery of the words "Who 's there?" was of such tremendous force that the poor young man was completely unnerved, and could only stammer out: "'T is I, my lord, the early village cock—" and could say no more. Again making an effort: "'T is I, my lord, the early village cock—" and then stood helpless and aghast. Regarding for a moment the helpless and hapless *Ratcliff*, Cooke blurted forth: "Then why the devil don't you *crow*?"

As we were not far from my father's place of birth, near Moffat, in the parish of Johnstone, he surprised us one day by saying that he meant to take us all to Hartfield Farm to see his relations. So away we started, walking the journey, my father, mother, and five boys. Father told us that the distance was nothing to speak of, but as we were tramping all day, it occurred to us that we had had quite enough of it. We reached our destination late in the after-



*James II. Stoddart, Sr.*



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

noon. On the way my father pointed out the beauties of the country ; and it *was* beautiful, with its hills and dales, woods and rivers. The estate itself was magnificent. We saw the school-house, a long distance from Hartfield Farm, where, my father told us, he used to trudge every day. To reach it he had to cross a small but rather deep river, and he told us he used to keep a pair of stilts concealed among the brushwood to enable him to ford this stream. He gave us a description of his young days, of the schoolmaster, and of his companions ; how he used to hunt and fish ; and how the young chaps, courting the girls who lived on the farms many miles away, would start, after a hard day in the fields, to spend a “wee bit time” with the lassies they liked, “no caring at a’ if they but reached home in time for work next morning.” We saw, as we walked along, the deer bounding across the road, almost in front of us, and the trout jumping in the brook where father used to fish, and we thought how much happier he would have been had he re-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

mained at Hartfield Farm rather than with John Henry Alexander at the Theater Royal in Glasgow, although we might not have arrived to express our sentiments.

As I have intimated, all the Stoddarts in that part of Scotland were in some way related to one another, and although many of his relatives were dead, there were still a number in being. Father remarked that the different places looked familiar, so he found his way without difficulty, passing a number of cottages and small farms, the inhabitants of which came to the doors and had a good look at us. Of course it was an unusual sight: father in front, mother a little way behind, and five boys, in single file, bringing up the rear.

When we reached our destination, my father had some difficulty in making his relatives understand who he was, and this rather disconcerted us; but after considerable explanation they remembered him, although they kept looking at my mother and her boys in bewilderment. It soon became known that "Jeemes" Stoddart had come back, and that he had a wife

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and five “wee laddies, a’ just like steps and stairs, ye ken.” The house was soon full of father’s old companions. We had plenty to eat and drink. They and my father had long talks of auld lang syne, of those who were still alive and of those who had gone. These good people knew nothing of theatrical matters. In fact, one old lady asked if father was a *tumbler*, and if he could “stan’ on his heed. An’,” says she, “ye surely dinna mean to bring up these wee chaps to sic an occupation.” I have heard my father, in Glasgow, frequently, in the course of a heated argument, uphold the dignity of the theatrical profession ; but in the presence of this old woman he was mute.

As it grew late and near bedtime, there was discussion as to how we all were to be accommodated. It ended in my father and mother remaining where they were, while my brothers and I were distributed in the neighborhood. We remained some time, staying first with one family, then with another. As there were many of us, however, father felt that it would be un-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

generous to remain too long, since we certainly were putting our friends to inconvenience ; but when the time of our departure came, there seemed to be true and honest regret, and although our acquaintance had been brief, when my father and mother, with their brood, marched down the road, there were tears and "wee bit sobs" at their departure. The good woman who had first received us was the last to bid us good-by, with a "God bless you, Jeemes, you, your wife, and your bairns." And so we left Hartfield and father's poor, simple, but kind, honest relatives. It was our first and only visit. How many of them are still alive I know not. Alas ! I am the only survivor of the family that visited them ! From there we walked to Dumfries, quite a journey, though not a great distance from Moffat ; and, as the time for the opening of the Theater Royal was drawing near, we made our way by easy stages to Glasgow.

My brother George, who was nearly two years my senior, determined to strike out on his own account, and succeeded in

---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

obtaining a situation at the Coventry Theater, managed by Mr. Bennett, to play the first walking gentleman. In those days the actor had to begin at the bottom of the ladder, passing successively from general utility business, which consisted of anything and everything of a minor description, to respectable utility, which was a step higher. An actor then usually discovered what he could do best, and chose his line of business. The lines of business consisted of general utility, respectable utility, first walking gentleman, second walking gentleman, first old man, second old man, first and second heavy business, first and second low comedy, juvenile business, light comedy and eccentric business, and leading business. For actresses the grades were leading lady, juvenile lady, chambermaid, and first and second old woman. Of course it was hard work until you became familiar with the parts belonging to your line ; then it became comparatively easy.

My brother George was the first to leave home. He looked quite a man, although

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

he was only seventeen years of age. He remained with Mr. Bennett, who had two theaters, one at Worcester and the other at Coventry, for two years. My brother Robert and I remained with Alexander for one season longer; but the fact that George had struck out for himself suggested to us that we had arrived at an age when we ought to be able to fend for ourselves, so we wrote to various managers for a joint engagement, resolving not to separate if we could avoid it. Our applications were for respectable utility, and the favorable reply received was from Mr. Pollock of the Theater Royal, Aberdeen, who offered, if we were content to place ourselves under his guidance, to receive us at a joint salary of thirty shillings per week. Bob and I were frantic with joy; it seemed a fortune after Alexander's shilling and sixpenny arrangement. I think if we read Pollock's letter once, we must have read it fifty times. Of course we lost no time in sending a letter of acceptance. My father took a rosy view, saying it was a fine opportunity for us; that

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

we had ability, and would be sure to get on. "As for Jim," he said, "he 'll make a fine melodramatic actor. I never saw any one who could make a better back-fall." He advised us also to keep what we earned until the end of the Glasgow season, and with it to get ourselves a few properties, as we should require them.

"You will each want a pair of russet boots," he said, "a pair of sandals, two pairs of tights, a pair of fleshings, two ostrich feathers, and a sword." Father seemed as much pleased as Bob and I were; but mother, who had been sitting in a corner during the conversation, was crying. Bob said: "Why, mother, you are crying." Father, in his characteristic way, said: "Confound it! what are you crying for?" "Oh, I can't help it, dear," returned mother, "when I think of their leaving us."

So when our season in Glasgow had come to an end, we were not only enabled to get the few things necessary for the stage, but could also buy a new suit of clothes each. I remember them well;

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

they were black velveteen. Although I was fourteen months older than my brother Bob, our playmates in Dundee Street said we looked like twins. When we donned our velveteens, I recall how they made fun of us, asking if we were in *mourning for the cat*.

We had a vacation of a few months between our closing in Glasgow and the date of our opening in Aberdeen. Mother, who was our treasurer, was very frugal during the summer, so that she could give us sufficient to enable us to pay the expenses of our journey and see us over until we received our first week's salary. Dear soul! she was for days mending and getting all our limited belongings together. We sent the trunk containing our good effects ahead of us, as we intended walking some part of the way and riding for the rest. We walked our first day's journey, mother and father seeing us a wretched bit on the road. I remember we went into a tavern by the roadside and had some bread, cheese, and ale. Then the time for separation came. Mother knew

# ROYAL AMPHITHEATRE,

Sole Lessee & Manager, Mr. W. R. COPELAND, 15, Gt. Charlotte-st.

# BENEFIT OF MISS F. BAKER,

ON WHICH OCCASION  
MRS. STIRLING  
AND  
MR. COMPTON  
WILL APPEAR.

On WEDNSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th, 1853,  
A NEW COMEDY BY STIRLING COYNE, Esq., CALLED

# MY WIFE'S DAUGHTER

Mr. Leyland	Mr. STODDART.
Mr. Ormonde	Mr. STIRLING.
Gillyflower	Mr. BARNES.
Tutus	Mr. STODDART.
Mrs. Ormonde	Mr. COMPTON.
Clara	Mrs. BENNETT.
Mrs. Leyland	Mrs. STIRLING.
Rose	Mrs. P. BAKER.
	Mrs. EDWARDS.
	Mrs. JEFFRIES.

After which (by particular desire) the Drama of

# CHARLES XII.

Charles XII.	(King of Sweden).	Mr. CATHCART.
Frederick, Elector of Brandenburg.	(King of Sweden).	Mr. STODDART.
Tripolitano Middleton.	(King of Sweden).	Mr. ERSER.
Major Vanbrugh.	(General of Circassian Guards).	Mr. B. STODDART.
General Mervell.	(Horn-grenadier of Circassian Guards).	Mr. BARNES.
Colonel Hatchet.	(under the name of France).	Mr. CATHCART.
Post Officer.	Mr. STODDART.	Mr. CATHCART.
Ulric.	Mr. STODDART.	Mr. JAMES.
Eulalia.	Mr. STODDART.	Mrs. MASKELL.
Eulalia.	(Daughter of Adam Brück).	Mrs. FANNY BAKER.

To be followed by a New and Original Farce, in One Act, by J. P. WIGGLES, Esq., entitled

# FOUNDED ON FACTS!

Sceptic.	Caprice (Harlequin).	Mr. ERSER.
Lancaster French Oakley.	(his Original Character).	Mr. COMPTON.
George.	(a Waiter).	Mr. JOHN.
Mrs. Sceptic.	Hebe (Harlequin).	Mrs. WALLIS.

The whole to conclude with THE

# MIDNIGHT WATCH.

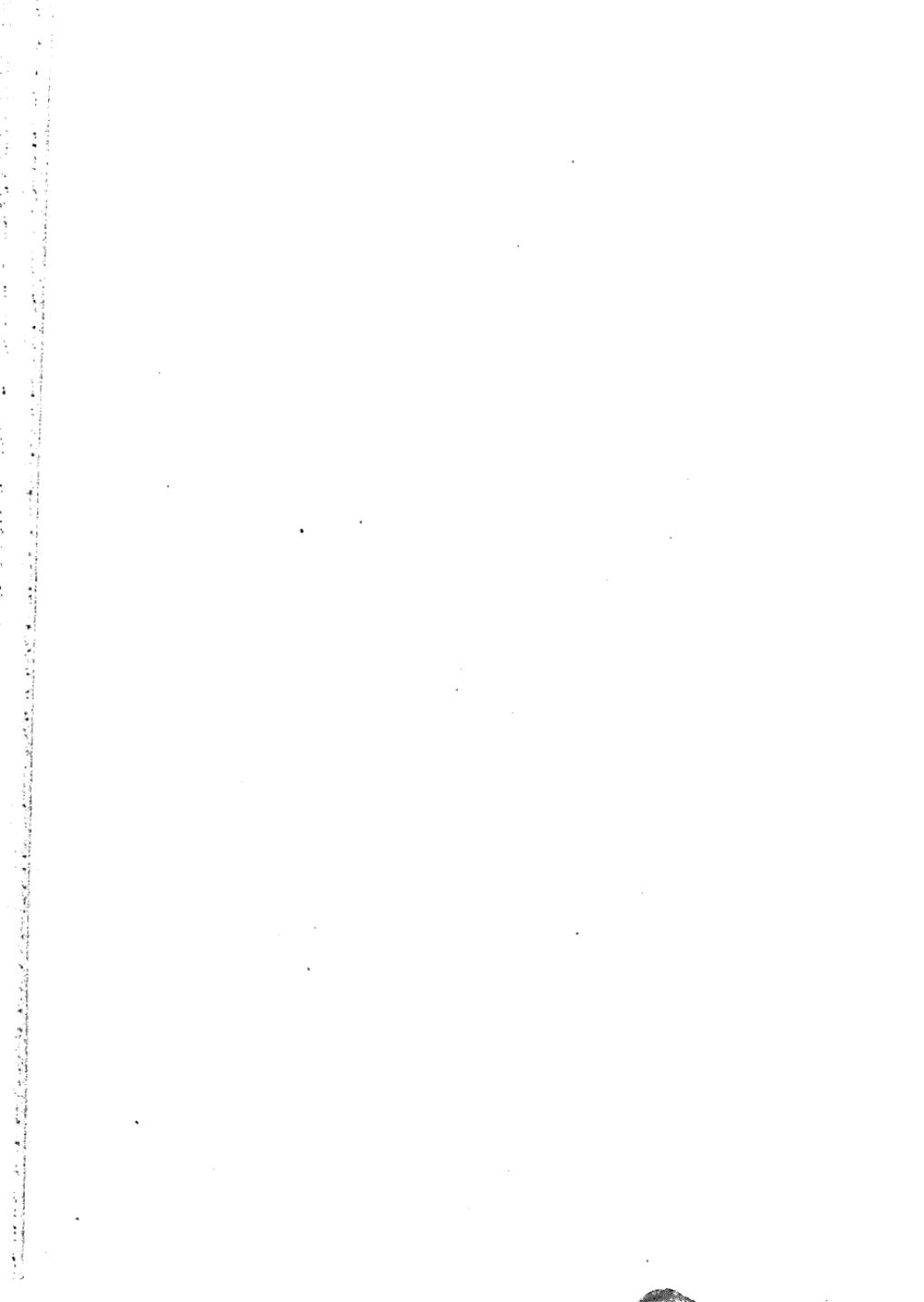
A TALE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Antoine Daudet.	Firme (Belarosa).	Mr. CATHCART.
Camille.	(Count of Belarosa).	Mr. RICHARD STODDART.
Frédéric.	Adjutant.	Mr. B. STODDART.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mr. H. BARNES.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mr. HUNTER.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mr. MACKAY.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mr. JOHN.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mr. KERSH.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mrs. BAKER.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mrs. ERSER.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mrs. EDWARDS.
Esmeralda.	Esmeralda.	Mrs. JEFFRIES.

## PROGRAMME.

**The Fortress**—**The Prisoner**—**Unexpected Meeting**—**The School-fellows**—**The Note**.  
“AT MIDNIGHT AN ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO SAVE YOU!”

Arrival of the Guard—“Tis Me!”—The Watch is fixed—“Exchange with Me!”—Agreed—The Story—The



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

us; father grasped our hands, crying: "God bless you, boys!" They turned toward Glasgow, and Bob and I faced the north and the world. We were all sniveling. The first part of our journey we walked, and having abundance of time, we did it by easy stages.

We were determined to ride into Aberdeen, which we did, arriving on a Sunday. Having ascertained that the Theater Royal was situated in Marshall Street, we set out to look for suitable lodgings in the vicinity, and succeeded in finding a nice room. At the theater we found our trunk, and promptly caused it to be sent to our lodging. The theater was to open on the following Wednesday. When we arrived again at our room, the landlady seemed anxious to know our occupation, and when we told her that we were actors she was somewhat taken aback, and we heard her repeat the information to others in the next room, and it appeared to stagger the entire family. Nothing was said until Bob, while unpacking his bag, began to whistle a snatch of a song. It was then

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

that the landlady really bounded into our room, exclaiming in great perturbation: "For mercy's sake, what are you doin', whistlin' on the Lord's day? Git oot o' ma hoose! Put your things back into your bag, and git oot." We told her, in no mistakable terms, what we thought of her, and we left. And it was fortunate that we did so, for we succeeded in being received in the house of one of the kindest and most motherly of persons, with whom we remained for a number of years.

On the following morning we went to the theater, and found that the opening play was "Hamlet," in which we were assigned two small parts. Later, however, we were informed by Mr. Pollock that the actor who was to have played *Horatio* could not come, and that one of us would have to go on for the part. Of course Bob did not want to attempt it, nor did I; but, by virtue of my seniority of fourteen months, it finally devolved on me. I remember how I walked up and down our room, hour after hour, trying to get the words of *Horatio* into my head. Now

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

I could repeat it ; then all the words would leave me. Mr. Richard Young, a good actor, had been brought from London as our leading man, and he chose *Hamlet* for his opening part. At rehearsal he instructed the actors playing *Horatio* and *Marcellus* to do just as he did in making the exit when *Hamlet* follows the ghost off. *Hamlet's* business was to drop his hat and cloak, and, crouching, point with his left hand as he made his exit, saying : "Go on ! I 'll follow thee." I suppose it must have been effective, for he received a round of applause ; but when we, acting according to our instructions, picked up his hat and cloak, and, crouching, pointed with our left hands, in clumsy imitation of the Dane, we certainly did not evoke the public favor. A low comedian would have been well pleased at the manner in which our efforts were received. Mr. Pollock, who was at the wing when we came off, said to us : "What the devil are you doing ?" We could only stammer that Mr. Young had told us to make our exit in that way. I really knew more of

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

the words than I thought I should, but I was disconcerted at the behavior of the audience whenever *Marcellus* or *Horatio* appeared, and I was very glad when it was all over. Bob comforted me with the assurance that I had done well under the circumstances, but Mr. Pollock had formed a different opinion, for next day he sent me the following note :

DEAR SIR: Your services will not be required after the expiration of four weeks. If your brother wishes, we shall be pleased to retain him.

Yours truly,

WILLIAM POLLOCK.

I do not think I ever felt more unhappy in my life. Bob and I had made close calculations of the amount we should be able to save out of our thirty shillings, and had arranged what we would purchase. I remember how dear Bob endeavored to console me. "Never mind, Jim," he said ; "we can live on the fifteen shillings I receive, and you can be understudying parts, so it will be all right yet." I inclosed Mr. Pollock's note to my father, and received, by return mail, this answer :

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

DEAR JIM: Sorry to hear of your trouble. At the end of the four weeks make yourself quite sure at the treasury, pull Pollock's nose, and come home.

Your affectionate FATHER.

“Hamlet” was repeated before my four weeks’ notice had expired. I was now glib in the words, and Mr. Young had cut out the objectionable business of our exit. I was told by members of the company that if I had been as good at the first representation as at the second, I should have been all right. During what I supposed to be my final week they played a Scotch drama called “Gilderoy,” in which I was cast for the part of *Walter Logan*. Now this was one of Alexander’s old pieces, and *Walter Logan* one of my father’s characters. He was supposed to be an old Scotchman taken prisoner by the English, and under sentence of death, and he had some telling patriotic pieces to deliver, one ending, I remember, with the words, “Scotland may be the friend of England, but never will be her slave.” I knew all the words of the part, and remembered

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

where father used to get his applause. Bob said, "Jim, this is your chance ; show them what they are losing." I felt it was my opportunity, and I got on so well that Mr. Pollock came to me after the performance, congratulated me, and said he thought that, on reflection, it would be a pity to separate me from my brother, so he would be glad to have me remain. I did so, for a number of years. I was not much over seventeen, and had to put on a gray wig for the part of *Walter Logan*. I have been wearing them ever since.

We had an eight months' season in Aberdeen, and played nearly all the remainder of the year in the smaller towns in the north of Scotland,—Arbroath, Forfar, Banff, Fochabers, and Elgin,—going as far north as Inverness. We grew to know many kind people in these places, visiting them as we did every year. In fact, no two fellows could have been more happy than we were on our thirty shillings a week, which was more than ample for all our wants, and enabled us even to send a little home to our brothers Dick and Ben.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

In those days a man could live in a small town in the north almost for nothing. In Banff we had a good room, and the "gude wife," the owner of the cottage in which we lived, bought our provisions for the week ; and when we asked her what we should pay she looked at us in the kindest way, and said : "Weel, laddies, it has been a great pleasure to me and the bairns to have ye in the hoose all the week, so I dinna think I could charge you onything." Despite our protestations, she would receive nothing from us, and the only way we could recompense her at all was by slipping a few shillings into the hands of the wee tots her children, who clung to the dress of their mither, saying they didna want to see us go. This is only one instance of the kindness we experienced in the north of Scotland.

We had no study, playing the same pieces that we had played in Aberdeen. Bob and I fished, I believe, nearly every stream worth fishing in the north. We would "flog" the streams most of the day, often taking a few trout into an adjacent

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

farm-house, and getting a bowl of sweet milk and a bit of oatmeal-cake for our pains. The "auld wife" of the house was ever eager to hear "a' the news frae the toon," and have a "wee crack aboot her Majesty the Queen," whom every Scotch country woman loved. And so the weeks flew quickly by until the time for our re-opening in Aberdeen. Before the end of our career there Mr. Pollock said he regarded us as two of the most important members of his company, and he proved it by raising our salaries each season. I played all the first old men, and Bob the comedy business. We had a joint benefit every year, which always turned out well. Thus all went bravely, and we were happy and contented, until I discovered that Bob had fallen head over ears in love with a Scotch lassie and begun seriously to contemplate matrimony. I felt it would be a great mistake, not only for him, but for the object of his affections, who was the daughter of poor Scotch country people. Bob was young, and was only dawning into a position, and had a very small salary ; so

# NEW ADELPHI THEATRE

CHRISTIAN STREET, ISLINGTON

SPECIAL NIGHT OF ATTRACTION!

Mr. W. S. BRANSON respectfully estimates that the Veteran Actor

# MR. J. H. STODDART

IS RETIRING FOR EVER FROM THE STAGE. WILL TAKE HIS

## FAREWELL BENEFIT

And make his last appearance in the above Theatre, where he appeared so many years by favor of the public,  
ON WEDNESDAY NEXT, JULY 26, 1865

# W. R. COPELAND, Esq.

Has in the most handsome manner granted the valuable services of the following distinguished  
members of the Royal Amphitheatre Company, viz.

# Mr. J. C. COWPER MISS RIGNOLD, AND MISS GOODALL

(WHO WILL APPEAR IN THREE OF THEIR MOST FAVOURITE CHARACTERS.

# MR. LOWE,

A Gentleman of Liverpool, has kindly given his aid for this Night only.

# MR. HARRY MACARTHY

WILL ALSO PERFORM ONE OF HIS BEST IRISH CHARACTERS.

The curtain will rise at Seven o'clock, upon his favorite Play, supported in Two Acts, by J. C. COOPER, Esq., etc.

# THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR

Edgar of Ravenswood - - - - - Mr. J. C. COWPER  
Caleb Balderstone ... (his last appearance upon any stage) ... - - - - - Mr. J. H. STODDART  
Mr. M. ROBSON  
Lucy Ashton - - - - - Miss RIGNOLD

## GRACOVENNE

MISS JENNY FRANKLIN.

In the Course of the evening Mr. W. S. BRANSON will (for this night only) deliver the concluding Act of

# BUCKS HAVE AT YE ALL! OR, THE PICTURE OF A PLAYHOUSE.

AFTER WHICH, THE MUSICAL FARE OF THE

# LOAN OF A LOVER

Gerritnde - - - - - Miss GOODALL  
Peter Byck - - - - - Mr. M. ROBSON

Paddy Ryan - - - - - Miss JENNY FRANKLIN

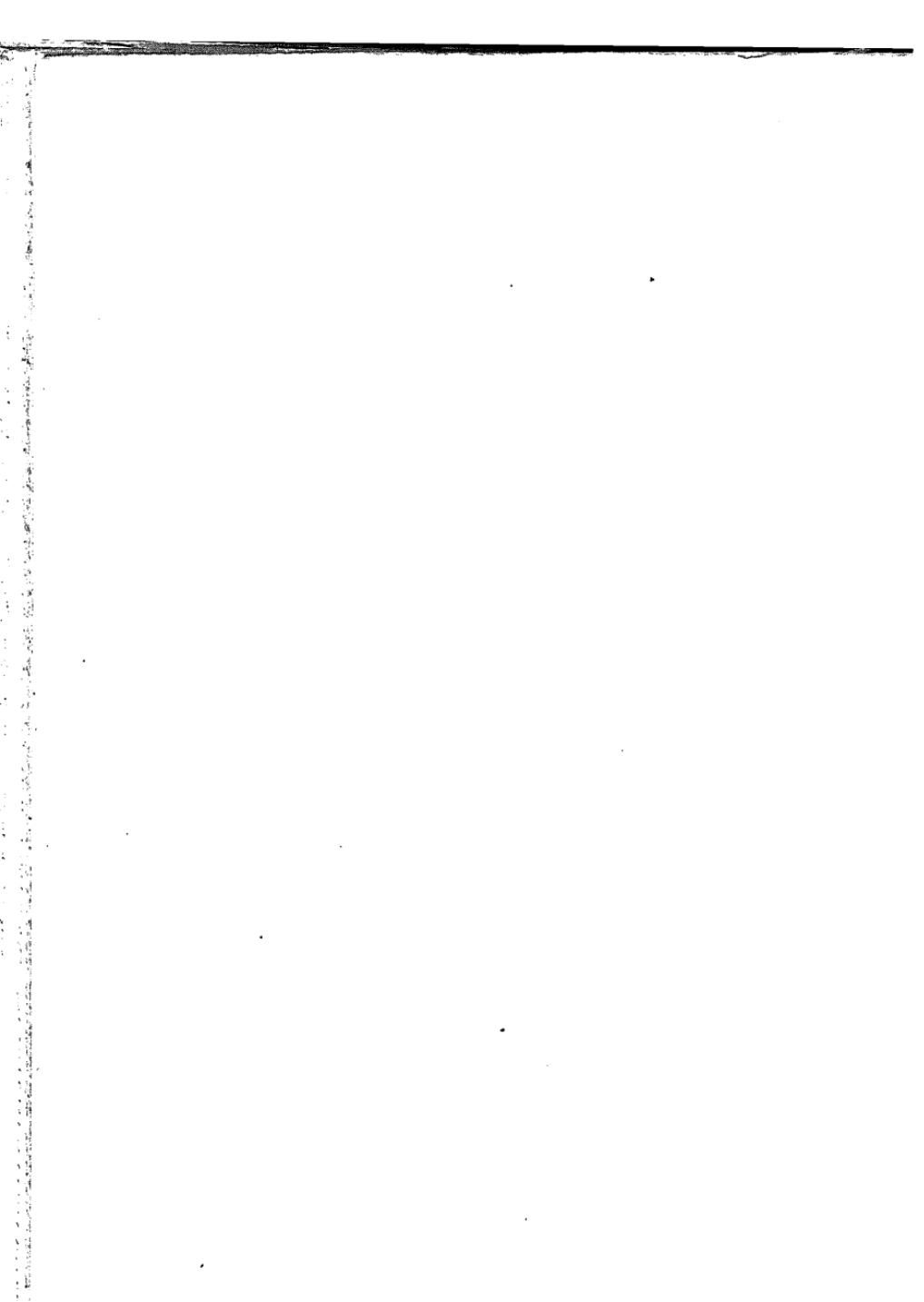
# IRISH FINGER

Paddy Ryan - - - - - Mr. H. MACARTHY  
Mandy - - - - - Miss TEFFIE MACDONALD

# WICKED WIFE

In which Mr. C. KING, Mr. M. ROBSON, and Mrs. W. H. DENTON will appear

PRICES OF ADMISSION AS USUAL.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

I, as his senior, thought my age gave me the right to exert a little authority. He met my argument, however, as to the smallness of his income, in a way that made me feel somewhat ashamed, by reminding me that when I had been discharged, and he had proffered to divide his salary with me, there then arose no such objection, and said that there should be no difference between *keeping me* and *keeping Jeannie*. I was rather nonplussed. However, Bob was a good, sensible chap, and felt it somewhat of a risky step to take, and so matters drifted along for more than a year. But time could not alter the feelings of either, for if ever two young people truly loved, it was these two. One evening he did not turn up at the performance. I sat up nearly all the night waiting for him, but no Bob appeared. Next day I received a letter saying he and his Jeannie were married and had gone to England. I felt the separation keenly, and was lonely without him. They have both been dead many years. They had many troubles during a long married life,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

but those troubles never took from them their strong affection for each other.

At the end of the season Mr. Pollock expressed himself as anxious that I should remain, and I had really become an essential and important member of his company, also rather popular with the audiences, which was very gratifying considering how different my position had been at the beginning of my Aberdeen career. I told my manager that although I fully appreciated all he had done for me,—and he had been very kind,—I felt I could not remain without my brother. So I bade good-by to Scotland, and I have never seen it since. While I live I shall ever remember the many happy years passed there.

My father, in the meantime, had left Glasgow, and he was now engaged at the Adelphi Theater in Liverpool. So to Liverpool I went, and spent a few happy weeks with my parents and brothers. I could find no opening at any of the theaters in that city, but I succeeded in obtaining an engagement with Mr. Mose-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ley, the manager of the theater at Bradford, in Yorkshire. This engagement was thought to be a desirable one, for Moseley had been established in Bradford for many years. Moreover, the season was long and the money sure, which was quite a consideration in those days. Moseley would often have a short season also in Huddersfield, for which extra people were engaged. I was disappointed when I found that I was sent there and not to Bradford. The company was a good one. The Robertson circuit had broken up, and Mr. Robertson was now the stage-manager at Huddersfield, while his son Tom Robertson (who afterward wrote "Caste," "School," etc.) played walking gentleman at a salary of twenty-five shillings a week. Although, even at this time, he was writing, he had produced no play. Upon several occasions he invited me to his room to hear him read some of his works, and he would ask my opinion of them. I am afraid they were, at that time, a little beyond my comprehension.

The season at Huddersfield closed in

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

about eight weeks, and the company closed with the season. I had a letter from Mr. Moseley saying I might come on to Bradford and continue, if I wished. As I was the only one in the company who was so fortunate, I was congratulated by all my associates. I remember Robertson saying : "You lucky fellow, to be engaged for Bradford ! I wish I were." He also proposed to me that I should purchase of him his two pairs of knee-breeches, one of nankeen and the other of doeskin, saying that they would be useful, and that he would let me have them cheap. I bought them from him, paying half a crown for one pair and eighteenpence for the other. I have them yet, and when, in later years, Tom Robertson became the brilliant author, I often looked at those old breeches and wondered if the plays which he read to me in his little room in Huddersfield were those which were produced in his famous time.

I remained with the Bradford company for two years. Dominick Murray and Lysander Thompson—the latter an excel-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

lent actor of Yorkshire characters, who afterward came to America—were members of Mr. Moseley's company at that time. John Dyott, afterward a member of Wallack's Broome Street Theater, had also been connected with this company. John Dyott was a capital actor, and one of Mr. Wallack's principal members; he was well known and quite popular in New York at the Broome Street house. All theater-goers knew Dyott well, and liked him both on and off the stage. He had a standing joke which he repeated to us each night on entering the theater. "Boys," he would say, "I met a man on Broadway, and he said to me: 'John, do you know why you 'll never die cold? Because you 'll *die-ot!*!'"

My brother George, who had been for several years with Mr. Copeland, manager of the Theater Royal and also the Amphitheater in Liverpool, sent me word that he had spoken about me, and that Mr. Copeland had said he would be pleased to hear from me. I therefore wrote to him, and the result was that I left Bradford

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and went to Liverpool. This was by far my most important engagement, and after a time I had a very responsible position. All the stars from London whom I had met as a child in Glasgow I now supported in prominent parts. As my father was still at the Adelphi, we all lived together, and were very jolly. My brother Robert and his wife also came to live at Liverpool, so we were all employed at the different theaters of the city. It was a renewal of old times. As the theaters kept open all the year, the engagements were very desirable. At this time my salary was thirty shillings per week, and I played all the principal old men.

As I had conceived the idea of possessing a fine stock of wigs, I ordered Mr. Taylor, the theatrical wig-maker, to make a new one for me every week for an entire season. Every wig that I saw on the head of another actor, and that I thought a good one, I asked Mr. Taylor to duplicate. It so happened that William Farren came to play at the Theater Royal, and one of his parts was *Grandfather Whitehead*.

---

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

I was completely delighted with the wig he wore in this character. This wig, made to represent a bald head, instead of the old familiar muslin or calico had a natural polished scalp, and was the first one of the kind I had ever seen. As Farren walked into the green-room, made up, I could not keep my eyes off him. Mr. Taylor, the wig-maker, had dressed the wig, and he came to the theater at night to adjust it. The wig was so well made that no observer could detect where it joined the forehead of the actor. In the old days this was frequently not the case. I have often seen actors come to the theater late, and put on their wigs like nightcaps, daubing powder on their foreheads, and fancying themselves properly made up. I asked Taylor about Farren's wig, and how it was made. "Well," said Taylor, "the wig, I imagine, was *built* in France. The scalp is as hard as a board, flesh-colored, and shines. Then, he uses a composition or cement, the same color as the bald portion of the wig, which he heats over the gas, with a small brush in

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

it, and when the cement is thoroughly melted, he paints his forehead and the lower part of the wig, giving the whole three coats. It is a wonderful invention, but I think I could duplicate it." I quickly instructed him to do so. It happened that Mr. Barry Sullivan came to play an engagement after Farren, one of his pieces being "The Gamester," in which I was cast as *Jarvis*, a very old man. "Here," thought I, "is my chance to wear the Farren wig." Taylor promised to have it ready, and he kept his word. I had my cement-brush, etc., but the wig could not be made to sit snugly on the top of my head ; it had rather the appearance of a well-developed cocoanut. However, we both thought that it did n't much matter, as it had such a beautiful polish. "Beginners" were called, and I left my dressing-room for the green-room, where most of the characters were assembled. When I made my appearance with my new wig, they were convulsed with laughter, and Barry Sullivan, who was known to be the most disagreeable of men, said :

# Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden

This present MONDAY, October 24. 1814,

Will be acted SHAKESPEARE's Tragedy of

# Romeo and Juliet.

Prince Escalus by Mr. CLAREMONT, Paris by Mr. HAMERTON,  
Montague, Mr. CRESWELL, Capulet, Mr. EGERTON

Romeo by Mr. CONWAY, Mercutio, Mr. JONES, Benvolio, Mr. JEFFERIES  
Tybalt Mr. BARRYMORE, Friar Laurence Mr. MURRAY, Friar John Mr. HOWELL

Apothecary, Mr. Freby, Page, Master Chapman, Balthasar by Mr. Duruſet  
Abram Mr. Sargent, Sampson Mr. Atkins, Gregory Mr. Crumpton, Peter Mr. SIMMONS

Lady Capulet by Mrs. RENAUD,

Juliet by Miss O'NEILL,

{Being her 5th appearance in that character}

Nurse by Mrs. DAVENPORT.

In Act I.

## A MASQUERADE and DANCE

INCIDENTAL TO THE PLAY.

**Act IV.** The Funeral Procession of Juliet, and a Solemn Dirge.

The Vocal Part by Miss Broadhurst, I. Brown, Everard, Leo, Linton, Montague, No-ris  
Taylor, J. Taylor, Terry, S. Jet, Fanny, Wilson, William,

Messdames Vibon, Bologna, Carew, Coates, Cerra, D'vies, Emery, Findlay, Grimdali, Heath, Hill  
Leſſeve, Linton, Log n. Louis, Marthe, s. Ryall, Sexton, Standon, Watu, Whimmore.

After which, 15th time, a New Melo-Drama, in 3 acts, (Founded on an Historical Fact) called **The**

# Forest of Bondy; Or, The DOG of MONTARGIS.

Colonel Gontran by Mr. BARRYMORE,

Capt. Aubri by Mr. ABBOTT, Lieut. Macaire by Mr. FARLEY,

Lieut. Landry by Mr. HAMERTON, The Seneschal of Bondy by Mr. EGERTON,

Florio (a Dumb Orphan) by Miss S. BOOTH,

Blaise by Mr. LISTON, Ensign, Mr. DURUSET, Sergeant, Mr. HOWELL,

Dame Gertrude, Mrs. DAVENPORT, Annette Mrs. NORMAN, Louise Miss WEST

Lucille by Miss FOOTE.

In act I, a Pastoral Pas de Deux by Mons. Soissons & Mrs. Parker

ENTRANCE, PANTHER, 2, NEW-STREET, LONDON.

ADMISSION ONE SHILLING.

## Miss O'NEILL's

Performances continue to be greeted with the enthusiastick admiration of overflowing audiences—the will repeat the character of BELVIDERA on Wednesday and on Friday next—and the part of JULIET on every Monday till further notice.

## Mr. KEMBLE's

Nights of performing will be Tomorrow, on Thursday and Saturday.

\*\* No Orders can be admitted.

**The FOREST of BONDY; or, The DOG of MONTARGIS,**  
being fully established in the highest degree of popular favour and attraction, will be repeated

Tomorrow, Thursday and Friday next.

**Tomorrow,** the Tragedy of CATO. Cato by Mr. KEMBLE.

**On Wednesday,** Oway's Tragedy of VENICE PRESERVED.

Jaffier by Mr. CONWAY, Pierre by Mr. YOUNG,

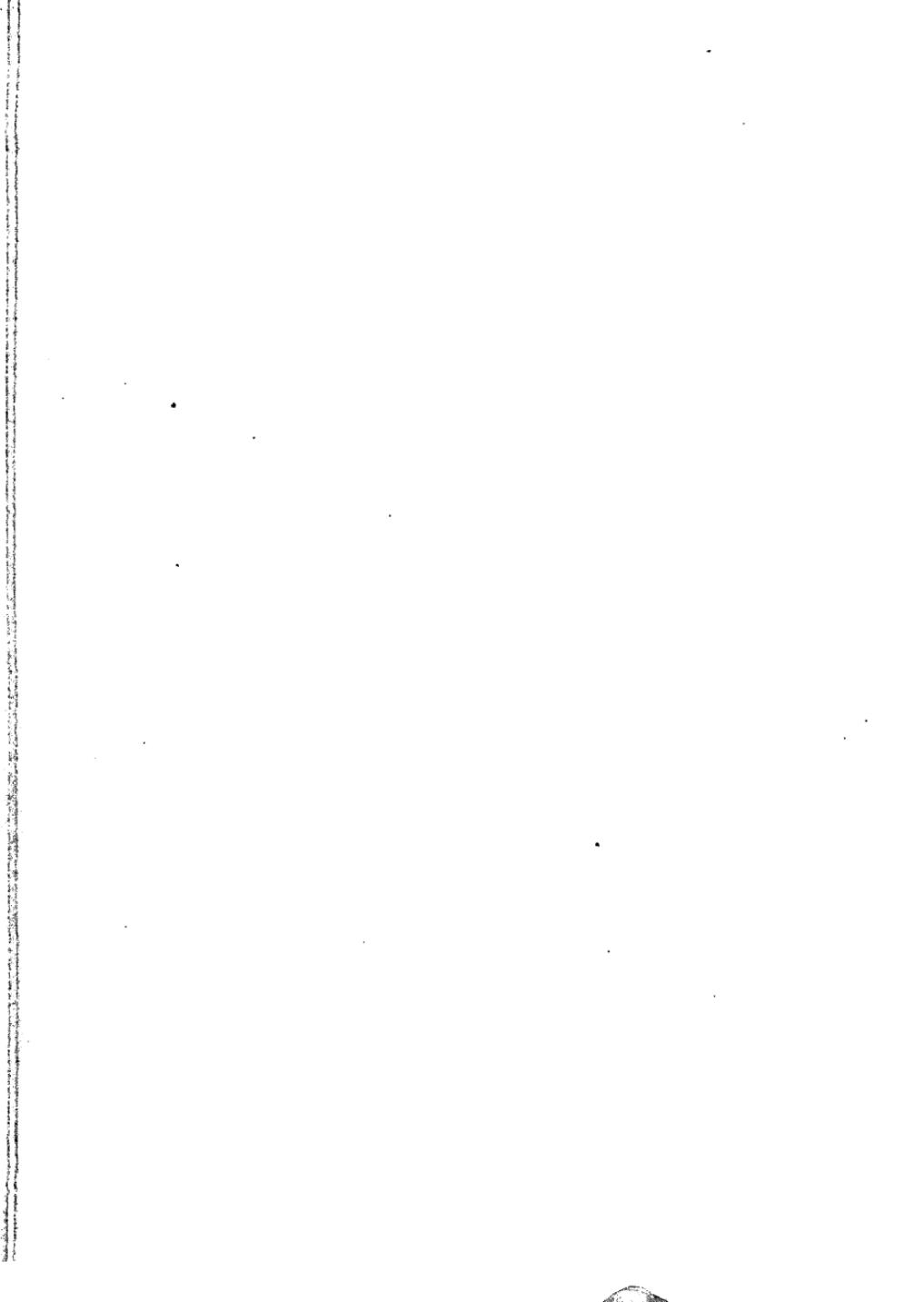
Belvidera by Miss O'NEILL, {Being her 5th appearance in that character}

With RICHARD COEUR DE LION. Maidha, Miss STEPHENS.

**On Thursday,** Shakespeare's Tragedy of HAMLET. Hamlet by Mr. KEMBLE.

**On Saturday,** Shakspeare's Tragedy of JULIUS CAESAR.

Brutus by Mr. KEMBLE, Marc Antony by Mr. CONWAY, Casca by Mr. YOUNG.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

“For heaven’s sake, take that porringer off your head, or you don’t play *Jarvis* with me.” Taylor, who had come to the theater to view his handiwork, hearing this remark, made his exit from the stage-door, and I ignominiously sought my dressing-room, and there removed the wig of which I had hoped so much, putting on one of the old make. I never repeated the experiment until I came to America.

During this engagement Sullivan had trouble, on one occasion, with a person in the audience. The play was “Hamlet,” and in a lower private box there sat a gentleman alone, who was not paying the slightest attention to the play, but seemed to be interested in a newspaper which he was assiduously reading. As Sullivan began the soliloquy, “To be or not to be, that is the question,” the individual in the private box continued to read his paper. At this Sullivan could stand it no longer, and walking down the stage and addressing the offender, “Sir,” he said, “when you have finished reading that paper I will go on, but not until then.”

The gentleman in the box, coolly folding up his paper, put it in his pocket, and adjusting his hat upon his head, replied "Thank you, I have seen and heard quite enough. Good evening." He then walked out of the theater, and the tragedian resumed his soliloquy. Sullivan was a favorite in Liverpool, Manchester, and other provincial cities, but never in London. While Macready was playing *Macbeth* at the Theater Royal, Mr. Copeland introduced Sullivan to play *Macduff*; but when he saw Macready's name in larger letters than his own, he left for Manchester, and would not act. He was a clever man, but ill-tempered, and he was much disliked on account of his irritating personal peculiarities.

William Farren played a farewell engagement in Liverpool a little while before I left for America, but oh, how changed! His appearance was the same as ever, but his voice had become almost inarticulate, and it was difficult to understand him. He brought down from London one of the greatest actors of his time.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Mr. Robson—"Little Robson," as he was called, small in stature, but a giant in ability. Farren would begin the performance with one of the old comedies,—such as "The Hypocrite," in which he played *Doctor Cantwell*, "London Assurance," in which he played *Sir Harcourt Courtly*, or "The Rivals," in which he played *Sir Anthony Absolute*,—and "Little Robson" played, as an afterpiece, each evening during the engagement, only the one part of *Shylock* in a burlesque of the "Merchant of Venice," entitled "The Merchant of Venice Preserved." In this his acting was marvelous. Farren used to stand at the wing every night to see him play the scene with *Tubal*, in which *Shylock* hears of his daughter's flight; and I have heard Farren say that Robson's performance was as great as Edmund Kean's.

All the principal London people, one following the other, would come down and play at the Theater Royal; so it was my good fortune to see and to be associated with Macready, Helen Faucit, Charlotte Cushman, Phelps, Mr. and Mrs. Charles

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Kean, Webster and Celeste, Charles Matthews, Mme. Vestris, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Buckstone, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, Wright, Paul Bedford, and many others. Although I was at that time, as I thought, getting on well in my profession, and had received many compliments as to my ability, in witnessing the efforts of these artists I felt myself to be an insignificant being ; and I was glad to be sensible enough to know it. All these stars would fill out the season until the production of the Christmas pantomime, when we played stock pieces with the regular stock company. Then every one had to do whatever was required of him. The consequence was that a member would have a fine part one night, and a few lines to speak the next. I can remember playing *Sir Harcourt Courtly* in "London Assurance," and, during the same evening, going on as a baker in the comic scenes of the pantomime, a board of loaves upon my head, and being knocked down by the clown and pelted with my own bread by the pantaloons.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

My brother George had received the offer of an engagement at a new theater in Boston, in the United States, under the management of a Mr. Fleming. George had already married Miss Ann Taylor, and they had an infant daughter (who is now, 1902, Mrs. Neil Burgess). Miss Taylor, like my brother, had been with Mr. Copeland for several years. As George had, therefore, an extra claim upon his exertions, and the American salary was nearly double that received in England, he resolved to make the venture. We all went down to the landing-stage and saw him and his family off, doubting if we should ever see them again. The crossing of the Atlantic, in those days, was considered a more serious matter than it is now. In fact, I remember, when we used to play with other boys in Glasgow, there was one of our playmates who was quite looked up to because of the fact that his father had been to America.

Our letters from America, during the ensuing winter, told of George's success in Boston, and how much he liked the coun-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

try. The chances, he said, were much better for success in the New World, and he advised us all to come out. I made up my mind that I would go, but my other brothers thought they would wait to see how I succeeded before they made the venture. My father determined that if I went he would go with me. As it was not thought prudent to arrive in New York much before the opening of the next regular season, my father had ample time for reflection. It was comic to note his change of mind and the different conclusions he reached. My mother was non-committal, saying she was willing to abide by father's decision ; but this placed her in rather an uncertain position, as he altered his mind each day. When the weather was fine he would say : "Mary, my dear, what a treat the voyage will be ! It will do you more good than all the doctors in Liverpool." Then, when clouds obscured the sky and the wind blew strong and cold, he would completely change his views, saying : "My dear, I don't exactly see my way clear in this matter. Crossing the Atlantic at our

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

time of life is a risky business, and I really think George was inconsiderate in advising it." Perhaps the very next day he would say to me: "Well, Jim, how about this American trip?" and upon my replying that I had made up my mind to go, he would immediately say: "Then, d— it, I 'll go too." I could not know surely about his movements until a few days before sailing, when we had to make the necessary arrangements. My father had a friend named Page, who was the captain of a sailing-ship called the *Washington*, and when he heard of father's intention he suggested that we cross with him. His wife, he said, was going, and it would be pleasant for her, as also for Mrs. Stoddart. The result was that we crossed in the *Washington*.

Mr. Copeland, our manager, seemed sorry that I was leaving, and said that he would add ten shillings a week to my salary if I would remain. But even this did not tempt me. I was not to be persuaded from my determination to visit America. He treated me very well, for when he

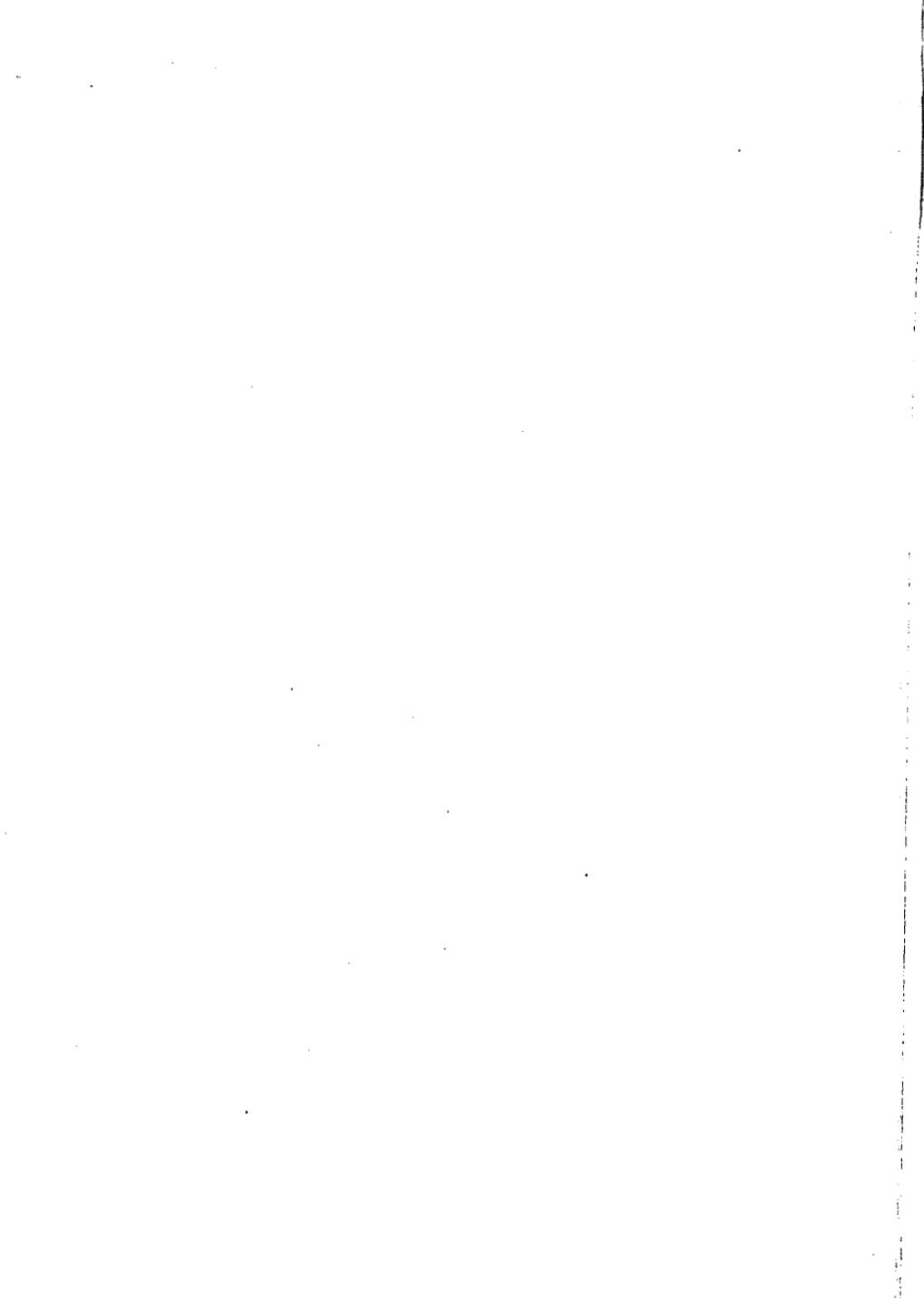
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

found I was resolved, he told me that the principal theater in New York was managed by a friend of his, Mr. James W. Wallack, who had played many engagements with him in Liverpool, and that I might use his name, by way of introduction, when I reached New York.

My brothers Robert and Richard came down to the dock to see us off; my youngest brother, Ben, being too young to be left behind, came with us. On a bright morning in midsummer we set sail. We had comfortable quarters, and the captain seemed resolved to make things agreeable for us. We were all jolly for a time; but my mirth was short-lived, as the motion of the ship soon began to tell on me, and after we got to sea I became downright ill. I was put to bed, and I never knew another moment's comfort until the pilot-boat took us in charge off Long Island. My father was a capital sailor—he would walk up and down the deck for hours, smoking his pipe; but my mother was almost as ill as I was during the trip. The voyage lasted six weeks, the weather being stormy during the greater part of the



James W. Wallack.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

time. I was in my berth nearly all the time, eating little and suffering much. Toward the end of the voyage my father insisted on taking me from my berth and getting me up on deck. He had to carry me in his arms to do so. I must have been a wretched spectacle, as I had not been able to shave for four weeks. Many who knew not of my presence on board were startled at my appearance, regarding me, I have no doubt, as some Vanderdecken, or monster of the deep. The weather was then calm and beautiful, so, to a certain extent, I was benefited by the change; but toward evening it began to blow, and, my former symptoms returning, I was glad again to seek the seclusion of my bunk. If the ship had been fated to go to the bottom, and I fully cognizant of the fact, the realization would not have caused me much anxiety. At this time it was brought home to me that I had been lucky to escape when I did not succeed, as a boy, in making the sea my business. But as all things come to an end, so did this voyage.

On a beautiful August day in 1854 I

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

had my first glimpse of the shores of America.

Captain Page had given us the address of a person in New York where he thought we might be accommodated with board and lodging. Here we were comfortable but for frequent attacks of clouds of mosquitos. I had a friend, a member of Mr. Copeland's Liverpool company, who was a native American, and he had first advised me to go to America, as to which country he was enthusiastic. He told me that the principal theaters in New York were Mr. Wallack's and Mr. Burton's, and that if I could succeed in getting into either I should be well placed for the rest of my life. I remember that he had grown enthusiastic, telling me that I certainly should double the salary which I then received, probably getting three pounds (fifteen dollars) a week at first, and that, with good luck, I might eventually receive a salary of five pounds (twenty-five dollars) a week. My friend, whose name was Morehouse, had married Miss Fanny Wallack, a cousin of Lester Wallack.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Charles Morehouse made his first appearance in America September 5, 1848, at the Park, under Hamblin's management, as *Numitorius* in "Virginius." He was the original of the *Drunkard*. He never returned from England. Fanny Wallack died in Edinburgh, October 12, 1856, aged thirty-four.

I had brought with me to America some playbills containing my name in various casts for principal characters, and I was told by Mr. Parsloe, who was at that time, I believe, the only dramatic agent in New York (he had an office in Chambers Street), that he thought I might dismiss the idea of doing business with either Wallack or Burton, as each had a company which was fully made up and difficult to enter. He said that there was a company being formed by Mr. Forbes for the theater at Providence, Rhode Island, and he thought he might place me there. I told him that in the event of my not succeeding in New York I should be glad to go to Providence. As I left him he said that he knew of no actor in the country who would not be

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

pleased to play anything with Mr. Wallack, and at Wallack's own terms ; but I was not to be discouraged, so I determined to approach Mr. Wallack, and thereupon wrote to him a letter, in which I said that I had been a member of Mr. Copeland's company in Liverpool, and had acted important parts both at the Amphitheater and the Theater Royal in that city, and that Mr. Copeland had said that he was well known to Mr. Wallack, and had given me permission to use his name by way of introduction ; also that if he thought he could make room for me, I should be pleased to place myself under his guidance.

I received no reply for more than a week, and had given up all hope when, one morning, a letter came from Mr. Wallack, to the effect that he would see me the next day. This letter created excitement. I dressed myself carefully in all my best. Mother said, "Good luck to you," and father, "Don't forget your playbills," and off I went. I had always understood that Mr. Wallack was one of our greatest

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

actors, so I was a little nervous when I knocked at his office door. But the manner in which he received me put me at once at my ease. He shook me by the hand, and asked about his friend Copeland, saying he was always glad to meet any one from England, at which his son Lester remarked (looking at me through an eye-glass) : "Yes, and there is little doubt as to where *he* comes from ; look at his hat and his boots."

Mr. Wallack then asked me what I thought I could do best, and I explained to him that, although a young man, I had always played old men. I then presented my playbills, which he examined, and, noticing that of "As You Like It," said : "Ah, I see you have been on for old *Adam*." I thought his words, "been on for old *Adam*," suggested a doubt of my ability to play it. Fortunately I had a newspaper clipping containing favorable mention of my performance of that part, and this I presented. It did not seem to impress him. At last he said : "Well, Mr. Blake plays the part with me. You, of course,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

never saw Blake." I was forced to admit that I had not. "Oh, a great actor!" said Wallack. And afterward, when I had seen Blake, I fully agreed with this opinion.

Mr. Wallack continued that he did not know what he could say to me, as his company was very full, in fact, as he said, comprising almost every one of any note in the country. "My company is large," he said, "and expensive, and my theater small; but if, as you say in your note, you are willing to place yourself under my direction, I will give you fifteen dollars a week to begin [strange coincidence! the very sum which Mr. Morehouse told me I should at first receive], and if I find you answer my purpose, why, in time I may do better by you." The twenty-five dollars a week which, according to Morehouse, would be the ultimate result of my exertions, seemed to rise before me. I thanked Mr. Wallack for his kindness, assured him of the gratification it would give me to feel myself under so able a director, and bowed myself out.

I scarcely know how I reached home.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

I rushed into the room where father and mother and my brother Ben were, shouting out in my exultation: "I am engaged by Wallack." "No," said my father. "Yes," I said, "and for three pounds a week." "I am devilish glad we came over," continued my father. My poor mother was anxious to know if it was owing to the playbills that I had achieved this wonderful success.

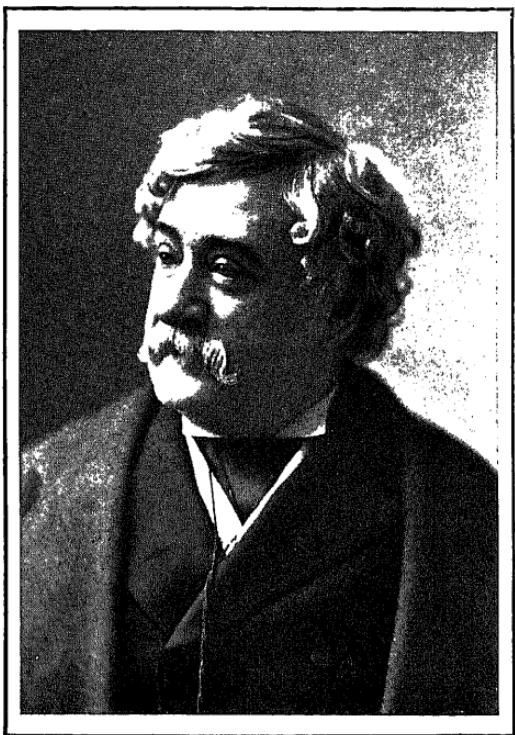
In a few days a meeting of the company was called. Mr. Frederick Chippindale, who was to have played quite a long part in the afterpiece on the opening night, could not act on account of the death of his child. The name of the play was "A Phenomenon in a Smock Frock," and the part was *Mr. Sowerby*. In Mr. Chippindale's absence I was put on for this character, and in it I made my first appearance in New York, September 7, 1854. The performance was opened with the singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," the company being discovered upon the stage at the rise of the curtain. There was a lady, Miss Matilda Phillips, who sang the last

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

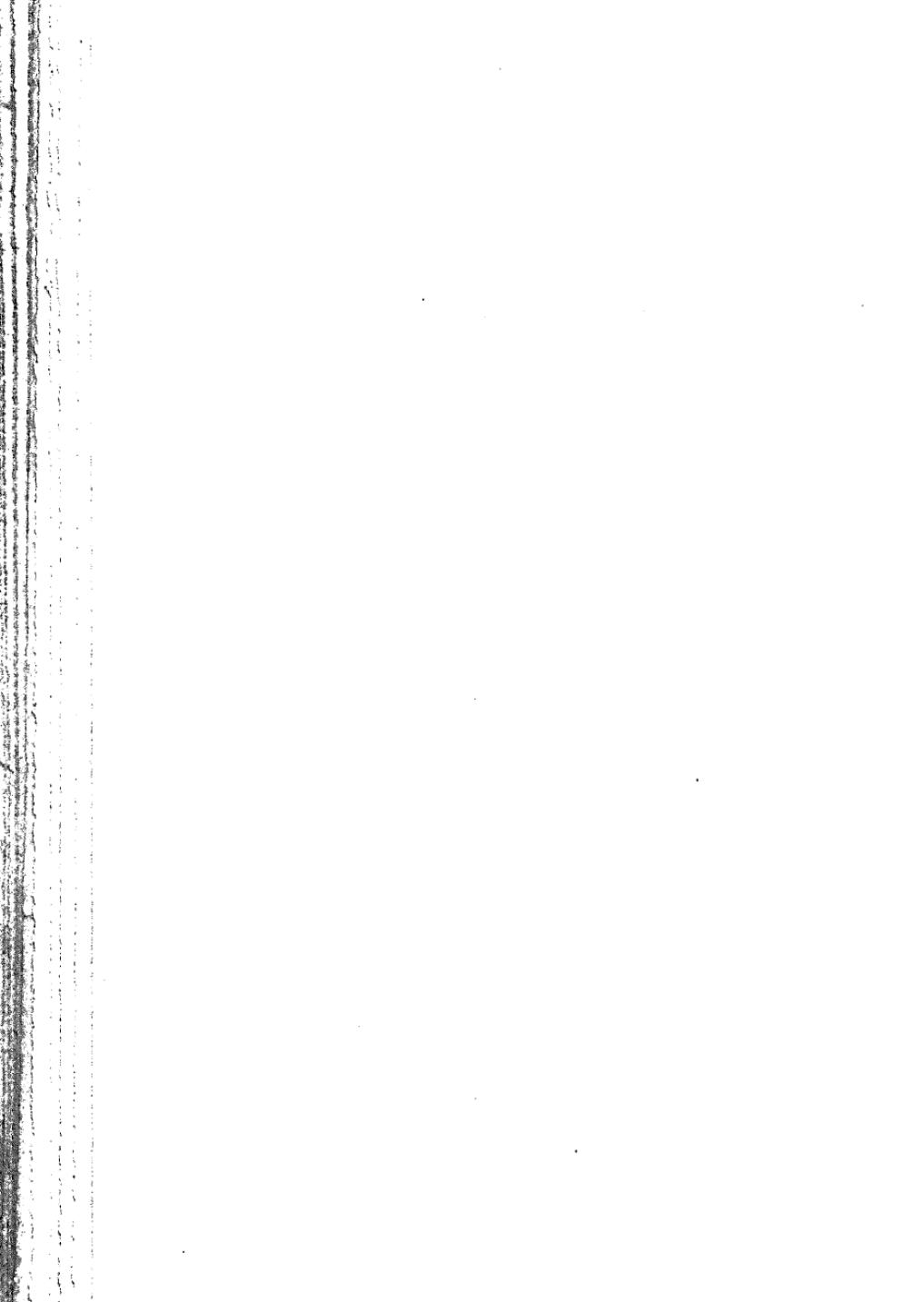
verse of the national song and afterward played in the last piece, in whom, even on this our first meeting, I at once felt much interest—a deep and lasting interest, which has continued to the present day and can never be effaced.

The first night's performance seemed to please. The first piece was a comedy, "The Irish Heiress." I remember that after it Mr. Wallack was called before the curtain, and he made a speech thanking his patrons for their kind reception of the old favorites, and incidentally alluding to a gentleman from England who had yet to appear, and who, he hoped, would find a place in their affections. I was sorry he thus drew attention to me, as it interfered with my efforts. However, I got through tolerably well. Mr. Felix Vincent, who played the comedy part,—the principal one in the piece,—I thought very clever.

As I saw more of the company my eyes were opened to its strength and individual ability. I had been associated, as boy and man, with all the great artists of the old country,—had seen giants individually,—



John Brougham.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

but it had never been my good fortune to behold, in its entirety, such a company as this, including as it did William Rufus Blake, the elder Wallack, John Lester (known later as Lester Wallack), Charles Walcot, Sr., John Dyott, John Brougham, Laura Keene, Mrs. Blake, Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Brougham, Humphrey Bland, Felix Vincent, and a host of others. Most of them had been associated year after year, and knew one another's style, and they played so well into one another's hands that the result was admirable. I do not think the old comedies were ever better played. I have of late mentioned the name of Blake and the names of other prominent members of this company, and I find many clever people of to-day who have never heard of those artists. "Are we so soon forgot when we are gone?"

In the early fifties John Brougham was, I think, the most popular actor in America. Everybody interested in theatricals knew and liked him. He was the most happy extemporaneous speaker, I believe, I ever heard. The public was well aware

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

of the fact, and in consequence had him before the curtain as frequently as possible. His speeches often proved to be the most enjoyable portion of the evening's performance. In the rôles of gentlemanly Irishmen, such as *Sir Lucius O'Trigger* in "The Rivals," and *A Gentleman from Ireland* in the play of that name, I considered him unapproachable.

My father, mother, and Ben went to visit my brother George, who was then acting in Boston, so I had to provide myself with a new abode. I was fortunate in being accommodated in the house of a Mr. James Smith, who lived in Marion Street. The Marion Street of 1854 was not as it is to-day. Many good families lived in Marion Street at that time. Mr. Wallack's house was in Crosby Street, and a charming home it was. Many a time the members of his company have met in his parlor to hear him read a new play, and they would always be invited to take a glass of wine and light refreshments at its conclusion. Bleecker Street, in those days, was a fashionable thoroughfare, and many

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

of the finest people had their residences as far down-town as the Battery. While I was acting at the Broome Street house I used sometimes to walk up Broadway after rehearsal, and upon reaching the region where are situated most of the theaters of to-day, would find myself comparatively "out of town." To Harlem was a journey.

I lived with Mr. Smith until I married, and I found him a charming person. He was a product of the times, not polished, but manly and good, a typical American of a class then common but now seldom seen—a Democratic politician, a contractor, a fireman, and, in fact, "one of the boys." He used to keep his fireman's helmet hanging over his head where he slept, and his boots close by, so that he could jump into them at a moment's notice ; and when he heard an alarm of fire, in three leaps he was at the bottom of the stairs.. He was never so much in his glory as when running "wid de machine." As was the custom in those days, he would take a basket on his arm and go person-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ally to Center Market, and there purchase all that was required for the household in the way of provisions. I occupied one of the best rooms in the house, and was always admonished to help myself to anything and everything on his sideboard that I fancied. His breakfasts were like dinners, and if I declined, after stuffing myself to a degree of discomfort, to take anything more to eat or drink, he would politely advise me : "Well, let it alone, you d—d Englishman." And for all this comfort and kindness I paid five dollars a week ! Such a mode of life would not be appreciated now, perhaps, but there was a great deal of plain, simple honesty about it, and much of real happiness, I am sure ; certainly less excitement, for so many people *then* tried to live within their means. A person, in those days, possessed of one hundred thousand dollars was considered a rich man. There was at the time a native dislike for show and ostentation. Every official was dressed like his fellow-citizen in plain clothes, and such a thing as a liveried coachman or footman was

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

never seen. I do not pretend to say that my views are those of many to-day.

To me there was something very wholesome in the customs of old New York in the days when first I saw it. The theatrical seasons were long, lasting about ten months, and a new piece was seldom played. The company was kept intact. The old comedies and standard dramas were always played, and the pieces being familiar to all, consequently, the life of an actor then was an easy and delightful one. The patrons of the theater comprised the best families of New York, and the principal members were great favorites and, I think, very much respected.

In those days Mr. John Lester—the Lester Wallack of after days—was spoken of as the handsomest man in New York, his only rival being Mr. George Jordan of Burton's Theater. Burton had a splendid company ; he was a host in himself, and had with him, besides George Jordan, such actors as Charles Fisher and Tom Johnson. Harry Placide also played each season, for a number of weeks, at Burton's Theater.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

These theaters, with the Broadway, Niblo's Garden, Bowery, and Chatham, Barnum's Museum at Broadway and Ann Street, and the Chrsty Minstrels offered the only amusement of the kind then in New York. When Mr. Chippindale returned to the company he was assigned to his old parts, and consequently I did not get much further opportunity at that time.

The Bateman children were playing at Niblo's Garden, and Mr. Wallack asked me if I would like to act with them for a week or two. I was very glad to do so, and played old *Pickle* in "The Spoiled Child," and a number of other parts, with them. After their engagement ended I returned to my old position at Wallack's. Thereafter the parts given me were of a minor desription; but I felt that most of my associates knew so much more about acting than I did that I ought to be satisfied that I was at least a member of the Wallack Company. I used to take particular pains in trying to do my utmost with every part for which I was cast, and had made up my mind to remain in New

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

York, however humble my position, rather than fill a more exalted one outside of the city, arguing with myself that if I had ability, New York was the place to gain a recognition of it. After all these years I have no reason to regret my decision. I began to achieve a reputation for my wigs, and the way I used to blend them—that is, join them to my forehead—when they were bald. Mr. Frank Rae of the company used to compliment me, saying he never saw any one who could match in a wig as I did. I remember when I was playing a very old man, a small part (but upon an occasion when Mr. Wallack was to be in his box), I put on one of my best wigs, and was particularly fortunate in the blending of it. When the first act was over, and we were all in the green-room, Mr. Wallack came in and complimented most of the people on their work. To me he said: "Mr. Stoddart, that is a beautiful wig of yours, and you have matched it in well; but as the scene is an exterior and the other characters all had their hats on, it seems rather out of place

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

for you to carry yours in your hand. Your next scene, I think, is an interior ; the audience will *then* have ample opportunity of seeing what a beautiful wig it is." These remarks, having been addressed to me before all the company, confused me somewhat, and I put my hat on, at which Mr. Wallack said : "Oh, you need n't put it on here, old boy ; besides, you know, there are ladies in the green-room." I was sadly confused by these remarks, and soon removed myself from the green-room.

In all these little mishaps and troubles I had a kind and sympathizing friend, Miss Phillips, of whom I have previously spoken. As far as I dared I began to become fond of her, and to pay her all the attention I could. Her position in the theater was considerably in advance of my own, added to which I thought her very handsome, and I knew that I was quite the reverse. We were about of an age, and there the resemblance ended. I heard she was the principal support of her mother and brothers, and was domestic, a trait peculiarly to my liking. Before joining



Mary Taylor.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Wallack's Theater she had been a favorite at Mitchell's Olympic. The company there was for a long time a noted one in New York, playing the lighter order of entertainment, such as light opera, burlesque, etc. I have met many old people in New York who would speak in the most glowing terms of Mitchell's Olympic and his remarkable company. Mitchell himself was a clever comedian, and his company included Charles Walcot, George Holland, Mr. Conover, Frank Chanfrau, Mary Taylor ("our Mary," as she was called), Miss Clark, Mrs. Isherwood, Mary Gannon, Matilda Phillips, and Miss Roberts.

The Olympic Theater had ceased to exist before Mr. Wallack's career commenced. Miss Mary Taylor and Miss Phillips were inseparable, almost like sisters, so I heard and saw a great deal of "our Mary." What a favorite she was! In fact, she was the main attraction of the theater, and the talk of New York, in "The Daughter of the Regiment," in which she played with Mr. John Nickinson, another talented member of the company.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Wallack's Theater she had been a favorite at Mitchell's Olympic. The company there was for a long time a noted one in New York, playing the lighter order of entertainment, such as light opera, burlesque, etc. I have met many old people in New York who would speak in the most glowing terms of Mitchell's Olympic and his remarkable company. Mitchell himself was a clever comedian, and his company included Charles Walcot, George Holland, Mr. Conover, Frank Chanfrau, Mary Taylor ("our Mary," as she was called), Miss Clark, Mrs. Isherwood, Mary Gannon, Matilda Phillips, and Miss Roberts.

The Olympic Theater had ceased to exist before Mr. Wallack's career commenced. Miss Mary Taylor and Miss Phillips were inseparable, almost like sisters, so I heard and saw a great deal of "our Mary." What a favorite she was! In fact, she was the main attraction of the theater, and the talk of New York, in "The Daughter of the Regiment," in which she played with Mr. John Nickinson, another talented member of the company.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

This was one of her principal characters. She possessed a fine voice, and she made many songs popular in those days. I have no doubt there are many now living who can remember the play called "A Glance at New York," with Chanfrau and Mary Taylor as *Mose* and *Eliza*. I believe there is not one member of that company alive to-day.

Miss Phillips lived far from Wallack's Theater, and Mr. Chippindale, who was an old friend, was in the habit of escorting her to her home after the performance. I thought, therefore, that it would not be injudicious on my part to hang on to Chippindale; so we would get out of the theater a little in advance, have a glass of ale together, and hurry back that he might meet the lady. After a time I got to be so frequently with both that I ventured to remark to "Chip," as he was familiarly called, that if I should be permitted to walk home with them, we might have another glass, or even more than one, after we had left our charge. Now, as Chip was fond of ale, he readily met my suggestion.

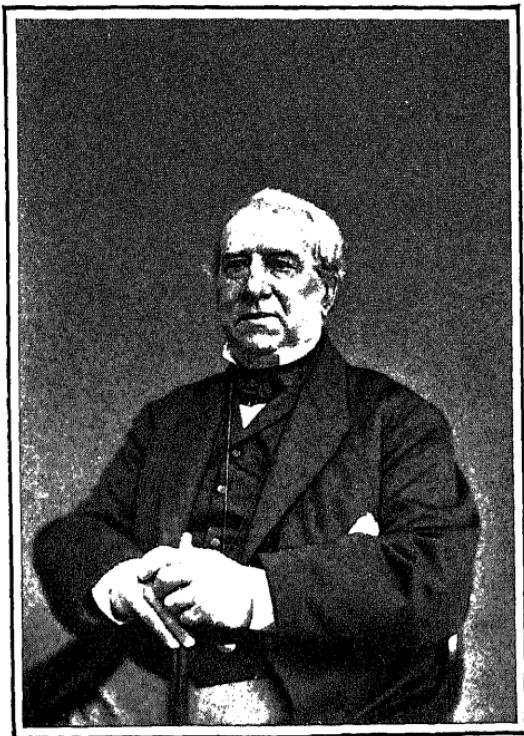
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

He was a delightful companion, and many times we turned up at a good place in Bleecker Street, kept by a Mrs. Rocket, and after a glass of ale there we would, night after night, visit a certain basement near Broome Street, and there have coffee and cakes for twenty cents, Chip footing the bill one night and I the next. I shall always remember him with kindness ; he was the first friend I had in New York. I fear I was rather ungrateful, for I began to plot how I might rid myself of his company, terminate our joint attentions in seeing Miss Phillips home, and convince the lady that a single escort was all-sufficient, and that escort myself. So, one evening, "screwing my courage to the sticking-point," I approached her and asked to be permitted to see her home. "Why," she said, "I thought you had been doing so for some time." "Oh, yes," I replied ; "but please don't have Chip." She would not at first consent to his dismissal, but as Mr. Chippindale was a married man with a family, and, I think, began to see how the land lay with me, he soon after

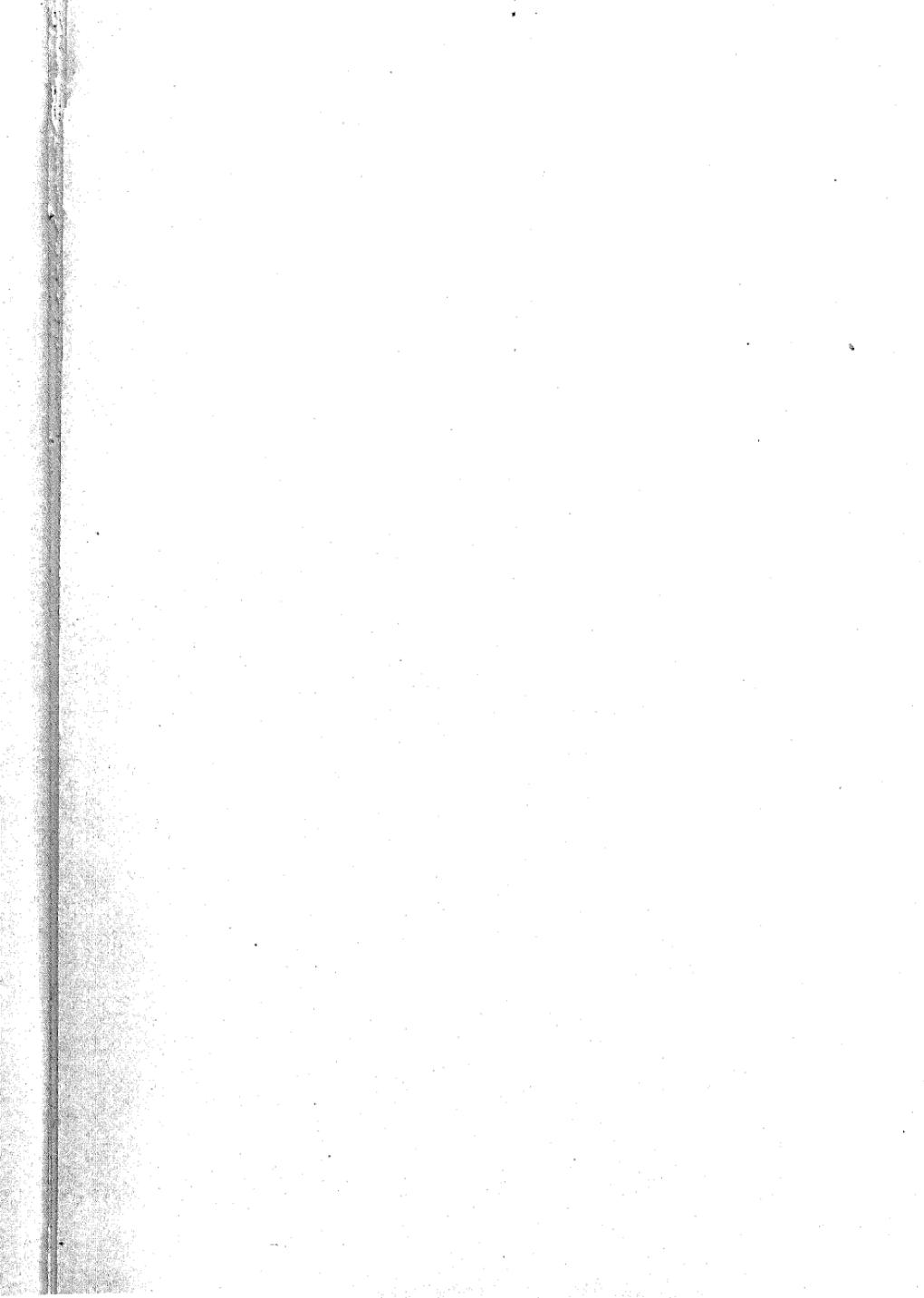
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

took his glass by himself, and left me in full possession. It was thus that I became acquainted with a dear good woman, my partner of forty years, a comfort and a blessing through all my life, until the time of great sorrow when I lost her (April 5, 1892).

An interesting member of Mr. Wallack's company at that time was Mr. Edward Sothern, who had adopted the stage-name of Douglas Stuart. He played the principal business after Lester. His opportunities not being all that he could desire, at the end of the season, there being then a vacation of about eight weeks, he conceived the idea of forming a company of his own. With this in view, he spoke to me and a few others, wishing to procure our services. As I was reëngaged for the next season at Wallack's, I was glad to fill, in this way, the time before my reopening. We visited Canada, opening at Bytown, now called Ottawa. As Sothern's main object in making the venture was to gain more experience, the pieces played were principally done for him, and even then I



George Holland.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

considered him clever. I thought Bytown a pretty place. We also went to one or two minor towns in Canada. The business was tolerably good during the entire eight weeks, and we all enjoyed ourselves greatly during the trip, and had a jolly time.

We returned to New York for the season of 1855, during which many changes in the company took place. Mr. Blake went as stage-director to the Broadway Theater, managed by Mr. Marshall. Mr. Blake left rather suddenly, some time after our opening, and Mr. Harry Placide, who was living in retirement at Babylon, Long Island, was sent for and induced to play Mr. Blake's characters for the rest of the season. I think Placide was the best *Sir Peter Teazle* I ever saw, and he was inimitable in his French parts in "Parents and Guardians," "The First Night," etc.

Mr. George Holland, Mrs. Vernon, Mary Gannon, Mrs. John Hoey, and Georgina Hodgson were all newcomers during my second season. Miss Hodgson made herself conspicuous by her able performance of *Pocahontas*, in the burlesque of that

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

name by John Brougham, and also by leaving the city, after her name had been announced, without apprising the management of her intention. I was connected with the performance, and during the entire run it never went with such shouts of laughter as upon the night of her disappearance, when it was played by Brougham and Walcot without *Pocahontas*.

Edmund Milton Holland at that time was a very little fellow, and went on in the piece as a "wee Indian." His father, George Holland, made him up for the part in a different manner at every performance, tattooing his face with all sorts of devices, much to the amusement of the entire company.

At the end of my second season Mr. Sothern had made arrangements to play at Halifax. I was now married, and both my wife and I were members of his company. John T. Raymond also went with us, as low comedian. Harry Isherwood, Wallack's scenic painter, a great friend of Sothern's, was also of the party. Isherwood was desirous to act *Iago*, and

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

so, to please him, Mr. Sothern put up "Othello." He did it for a joke, I think, for of all men I ever knew he was the fondest of joking. Sothern played the *Moor*, and was imperfect in the words; in the last scene he had a prompter concealed under *Desdemona's* bed. Isherwood's *Iago* was truly comic,—as he himself presently knew,—for, when asked to repeat it, having received a letter begging him to do so (written, we all thought, by Sothern), he could not be persuaded to make a second venture.

The English officers of the garrison at Halifax were patrons of the theater, and Sothern spent much time with them. A performance of "The Rivals" was given by the officers, and a good one, and I think it was owing to military interest that the season turned out well. After it was over our passages were arranged for return by the *Eastern State*, a steamer plying between Boston and Halifax. I dreaded this trip, remembering my former experiences on the water, but Mr. Sothern told me that if I would keep on deck, in

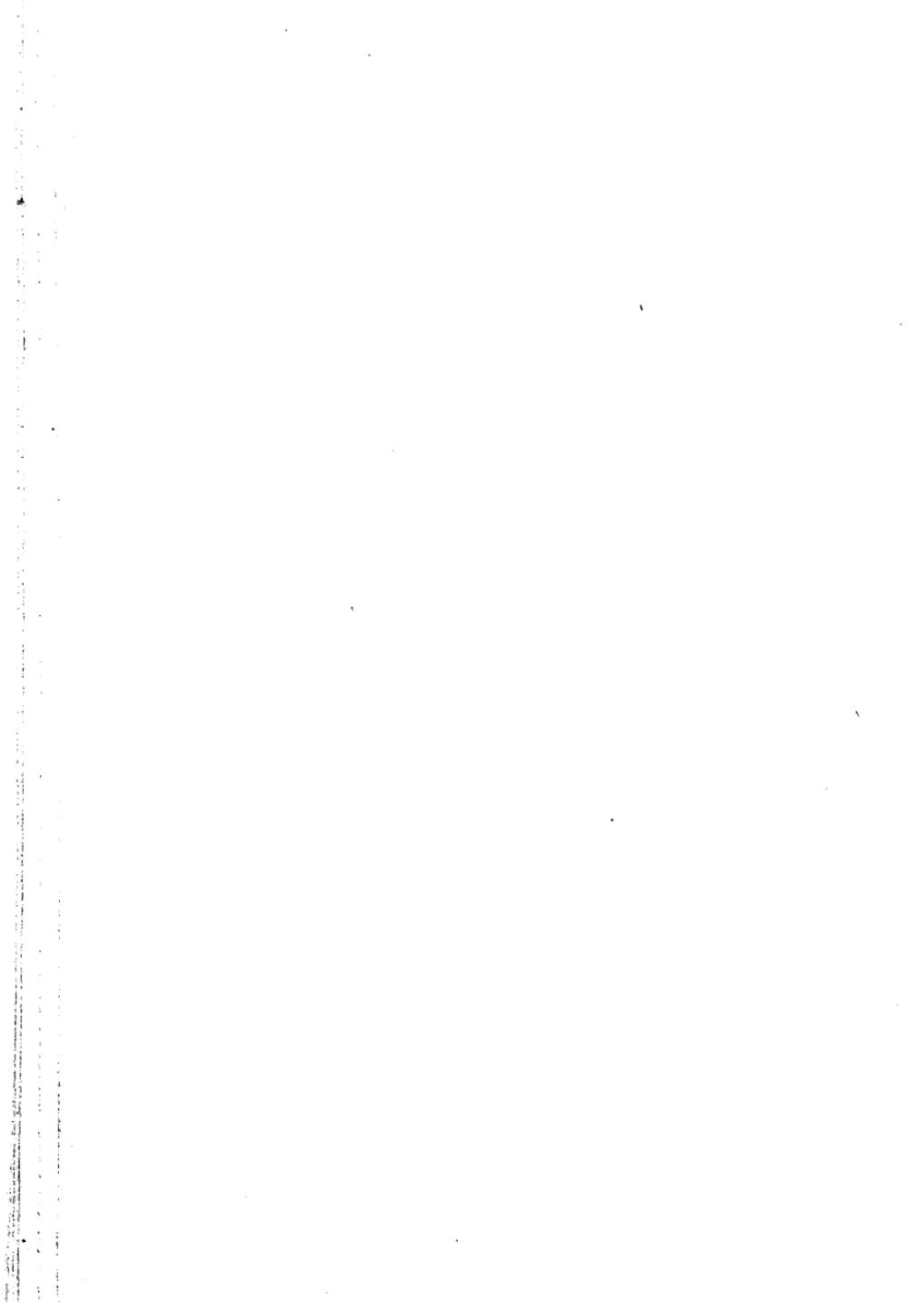
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

the open air, I should be all right. So we went on board after the performance, and were to sail early in the morning. Breakfast was announced, all of the company being ready for it, and no time was lost in seeking the saloon. When I reached the table all the places were occupied. In a short time the stewardess came to me, saying she could now find a seat for me. The *Eastern State* was moving in an unsteady and unpleasant manner, so I thanked her, told her she need not trouble herself, and made for the deck. Rain was pouring, but, remembering Mr. Sothern's advice, I procured an umbrella and a camp-stool, determined to fight it out on deck. I only succeeded in getting drenched with rain, and was glad to return to my state-room, which I did not again leave until we arrived in Boston.

During Miss Laura Keene's career with Mr. Wallack she became the greatest favorite of his company and the chief attraction of the house. I think she was largely indebted to Mr. Wallack for her popularity. She must, of course, always



John T. Raymond.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

have been talented, but it was her manager who developed her talent. He took infinite pains with her in everything she played, selecting pieces that he thought best suited to her ability, and the consequence was that her name became essential to every performance given. She would sit in front with Mr. Wallack at rehearsal, and he would consult her in almost everything. There soon came a time when there arose a very serious misunderstanding between them, the result being that Miss Keene withdrew from the theater, much to its detriment both in an artistic and pecuniary sense. She went, I believe, to Baltimore. That Miss Keene acted hastily, and afterward regretted her action, there can be no doubt, for a number of the best patrons of the theater sent to Mr. Wallack a petition asking for her reinstatement. He was inflexible, and she never played at Wallack's again.

Mrs. Sarah Conway for a time played most of the leading parts. It was not long, however, before Mrs. John Hoey came to the theater. She was the wife of

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

the late John Hoey, once president of Adams Express Company, and the first to revolutionize matters regarding stage costume. Her dresses were in good taste, and so handsome as to become almost the talk of the city. Mrs. Stoddart and I were reengaged for the season of 1856, my position in the theater being of so minor a character that I made application for Mrs. Stoddart only, and I received a courteous letter in reply. I had recently been married, and Mr. Wallack said he could not think of separating me from my wife, so he thought I had better remain. It does not seem so easy a matter now for man and wife to remain together in professional life; in fact, it seems to be almost the rule that they must go their separate ways, joint engagements not being thought by managers to be desirable. It so happened, however, that neither of us rejoined Mr. Wallack.

Late in 1855 Miss Laura Keene returned to New York and opened the Metropolitan, a theater in Broadway opposite to Bond Street, which she rechristened "Laura

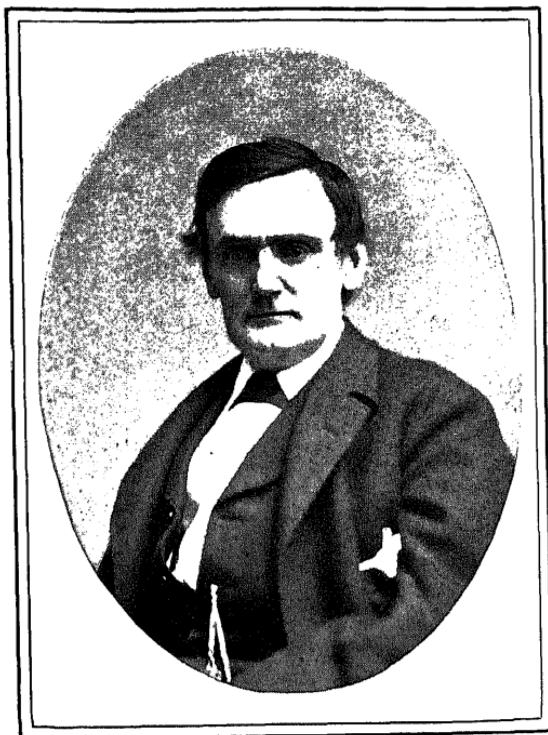
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Keene's Varieties." That theater, which afterward became the Winter Garden, soon passed out of her hands, and a new one was built for her in Broadway, between Bleecker and Houston streets. Mr. Wallack also made an arrangement with Mr. William Stuart, by which the latter was to occupy the Broome Street house during this season. Miss Keene wrote to us, offering a joint engagement for her new house, and as Mr. Wallack had, in consequence of his arrangement with Mr. Stuart, in a measure retired from active management, we felt at liberty to entertain her proposal. So, after communicating with Mr. Wallack, who was willing to release us, we entered on an engagement with Miss Keene. Mr. Trimble, who built her theater, should have had it ready by September, but it was late in November before the house was completed, and so the company was taken to Philadelphia and Baltimore in the meantime, returning to New York and opening at the new theater on November 18, 1856. The new house was beautiful. The opening play

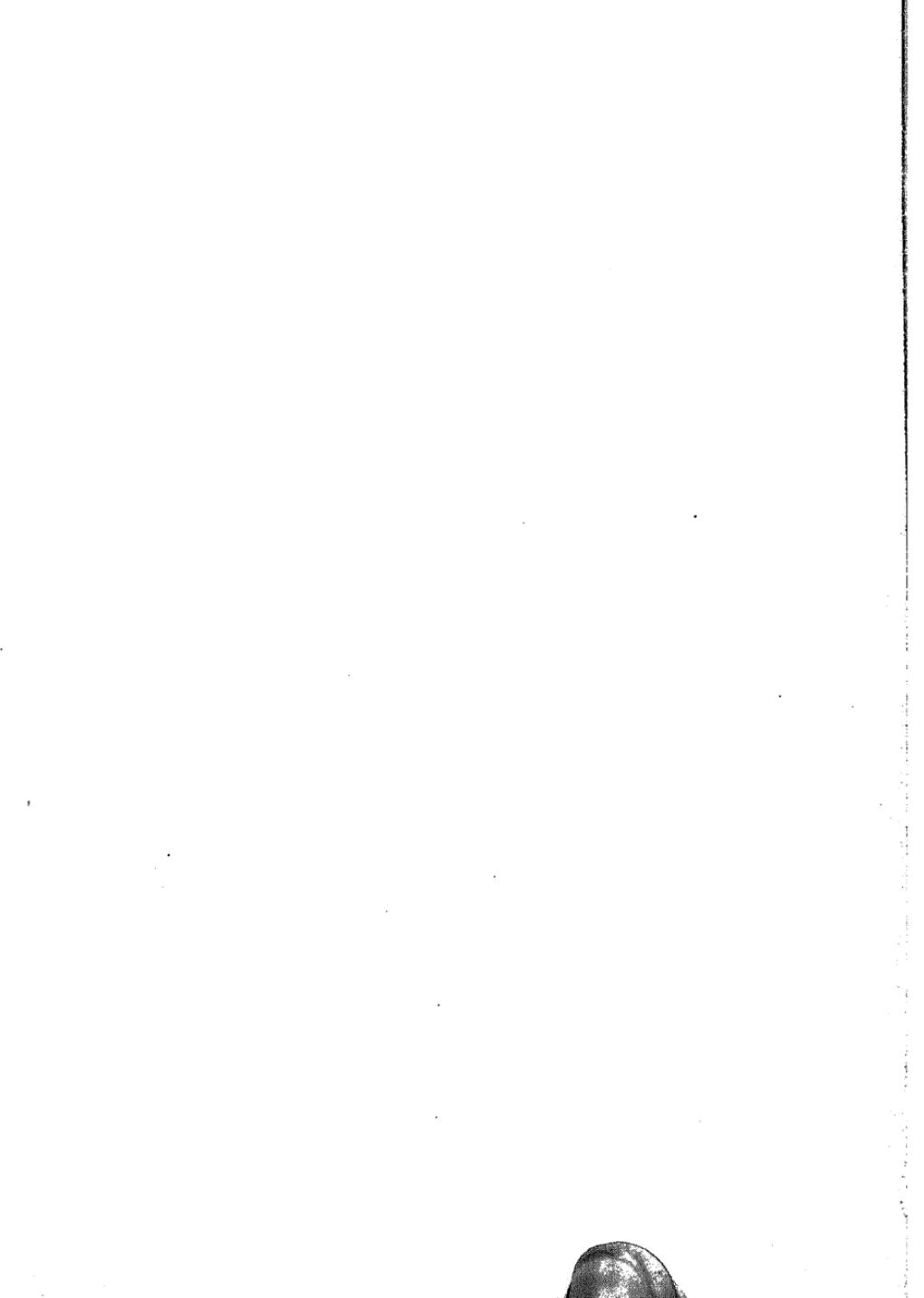
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

was "As You Like It," and Miss Keene had gathered a capable working company, George Jordan being her leading man. The reception accorded to her and her associates was flattering. The dramatic critic of the New York "Herald," Mr. Edward G. P. Wilkins, produced a comedy in three acts at this theater on November 24, 1856. He was a charming companion ; he frequently came behind the scenes, being a great favorite with the company. He was considered the most able dramatic writer of that time. His new comedy was called "Young New York," and it was a success. He died in New York in the spring of 1861.

At the conclusion of her first season, Miss Keene's venture seemed to be as successful as her best friends could have wished, with every prospect of continued prosperity. The second season began with an introduction to New York theater-goers of Mr. Joseph Jefferson, who appeared as *Doctor Pangloss* in "The Heir-at-Law" and as *Diggory* in "The Specter Bridegroom." This was the first time I had the pleasure



Joseph Jefferson.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

of meeting him, although I had heard much of him from my wife, who, before her marriage, had acted with him in Boston. I played *Steadfast* in the comedy and *Nicodemus* in the farce. Perhaps it is like "carrying coals to Newcastle" for me to record that Mr. Jefferson immediately captured his audience. I have since, on many occasions, had the pleasure of acting with Mr. Jefferson, and I now say, with all my heart, in the words of the character which he has made famous, "May he live long and prosper." Mr. Jefferson's career, I think, stands apart from all others. He is very little younger than myself, and our careers are somewhat similar; of course, I mean only through long servitude. In my early association with him we were both stock actors with Miss Laura Keene, and I had every opportunity of seeing him in a great variety of characters, and in all thought him pre-eminent. His effects were Jeffersonian, and you were left very little in doubt of the actor's identity; but his renditions were all so free from claptrap and so thoroughly

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

artistic that to me, whether in serious matter, legitimate comedy, or farce, he was always delightful.

I have frequently heard members of the profession regret that Mr. Jefferson confined himself to two or three parts,—in fact, almost to one,—and declare that he should have given the public new material. I do not think so. In my opinion, Mr. Jefferson is not only a great actor, but a good business man, and they do not often go together. He has made a classic of “Rip Van Winkle.” I have watched his career in it with a great deal of interest. What other actor has ever played for so many years so profitably one part—with people more eager to see him in his maturity than ever? In my recent wanderings I have heard expressed, by no small number, the hope that, as Mr. Jefferson, like myself, is no longer a boy, they might see him, before he leaves us, in “Rip.” Posterity will ever link his name with *Rip Van Winkle*.

In my younger days, while acting in England, I was associated with one of the

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

best actors I think I have ever met, a Mr. Sydney Davis. He played everything, and everything he played was *good*; and because it was good he remained all his life a soldier in the ranks. Versatility, I think, was the cause. Would Mr. Jefferson have attained his present position by constantly producing new material? I think not.

Mrs. Stoddart was not with Miss Keene during her second season, but had accepted an engagement with Mr. Duffield at the Mobile (Alabama) Theater. Mr. Wallack, who had retained me when he did not particularly require my services, but, as he said, in order not to separate me from my wife, had his revenge for our leaving him, since matters fell out so adversely that I found myself alone in New York and my wife by herself in the South. In consequence of the financial trouble of 1858, business at the theater was not good, and the money paid to us was of such doubtful value that I felt anything but cheerful; so that when Mrs. Stoddart wrote that an actor who had been engaged

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

to play the second old men in Mr. Duffield's company (Humphrey Bland was playing the first old men) had disappointed the manager, and asked if I would care to take the position, I immediately wrote that I would do so. As salaries were not promptly paid at Laura Keene's theater just then, I knew, or suspected, that if I told Mr. Lutz, our treasurer, that I was about to leave, my chances of getting any money would be small ; so I made known my plan to my brother George, and said that I intended to leave on a Saturday night. I forgot the play then current, but my part in it was unimportant, and I knew that my absence would not distress the management. As I depended on my week's salary to get to Montgomery, which was my destination, I was much disturbed when Mr. Lutz informed me he could give me only a portion of it ; but I was determined to make the start. My brother offered to break to Miss Keene the news of my departure after I had gone, but I thought this would be unpleasant for him, and so I addressed a



Mrs. J. H. Stoddart.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

note to that lady, endeavoring to explain that I had missed Mrs. Stoddart much, that a position had been offered to me at the Mobile and Montgomery theaters, where she was playing, that I had determined to join her there, and that I hoped Miss Keene would forgive me. When I rejoined her, years afterward, she told me that she did not think the manner of my leaving her had been either considerate or honorable, but as I had been married only a short time, and was naturally desirous to be with my wife, she would forget and forgive ; and she added that if my married life had been of a longer duration, perhaps I should not have made so precipitate a departure. We were afterward with her for a long time, and she treated us with great kindness and consideration.

Mr. Duffield, previous to opening in Mobile, had a two weeks' season at Montgomery, Alabama, and there I joined the company. The journey was a long one in those days ; I was nearly a week on the way. I am not sure whether, at that time, the railroad provided sleeping accommo-

dation, but I *am* sure that, if there were any sleeping-cars, I was not in a way to avail myself of their comforts. My earlier theatrical experience in Scotland had taught me not to stand upon trifles, and I knew that I should reach Montgomery and my wife, if I were obliged to walk every step of the way. In fact, a little walking would have been a comfort at times during that journey, for on several occasions I found myself, at night, curled up on a hard seat in a badly ventilated car, and every way wretched.

On reaching my destination I found Mrs. Stoddart delighted with the South. Humphrey Bland was the stage-manager, and Mr. and Mrs. George Pauncefort the leading man and woman. The company was a good one. It was arranged that I should begin as *Max Harkaway* in "London Assurance." My wife brought the part to me, and with it a letter telling me of the death of my mother—a sufferer for years, without hope of recovery, from the dreadful malady of cancer. The letter told me how thankful she was to be released, and

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

how, at the end, she had blessed her three sons and my father, who had stood by her bedside, and had desired her blessing to be conveyed to her "boys" in America; and while expressing the assurance that she knew the separation would be but brief, she passed away. A better woman was never called to a better place. Of course I had expected this news, and when I thought of her years of misery, I ought to have felt relieved that she had done with it all; but I could not feel so—I cried like a child; and it was in this state of mind that I had to take up my new character and endeavor to learn the words for the following night—a breezy, laughing, jolly part for which I was in but a poor humor. Many actors have been similarly placed, and upon like occasions have had to take up a laughing part with a sad and heavy heart.

I have omitted to say that my father's coming to America so late in life proved to be a mistake. He played for a short time in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. He had acted with Miss Agnes

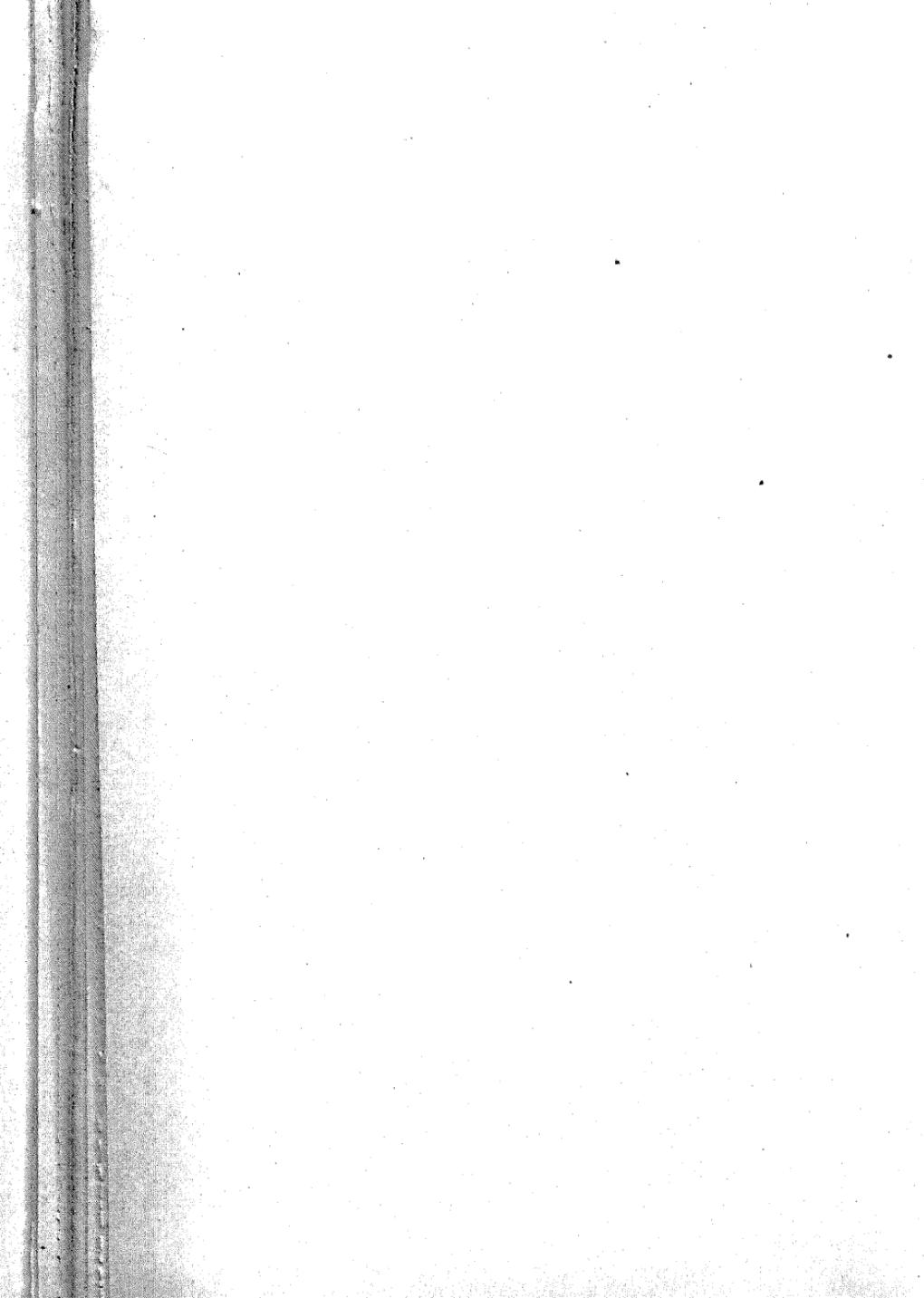
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Robertson before she became the wife of Dion Boucicault, and when a company was made up by Mr. Boucicault to play in New Orleans, my father was engaged in it. At the end of the New Orleans season he and my mother returned to Liverpool. I never saw my mother again.

At the end of two successful weeks we left Montgomery for Mobile, our manager, Mr. Duffield, being with us. We went by boat, upon which we had comfortable quarters. Mr. Duffield, Mrs. Stoddart, and I had a little table by ourselves in the dining-room, and it groaned with everything good. I ate of things that I had scarcely ever heard of before. I recall an incident showing the cupidity of the "darky waiter" of the day—his desire especially to serve those who were liberal in tips. Mr. Duffield, before ordering the dinner, took from his pocket a bright new dollar, carefully placing the same on the table, in sight of our waiter. The effect was magical; the waiter could not do enough for us, and was assiduous in loading our table with the best the boat afforded. After we



Agnes Robertson (Mrs. Boucicault).



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

had finished our dinner, Mr. Duffield, in an absent-minded manner, carelessly took up his dollar and put it back into his pocket, to the great chagrin of the ebony attendant.

Ben De Bar, who managed the St. Charles Theater in New Orleans, was the ostensible director of the Mobile house, Duffield being his agent. All the stars that played with De Bar came to Mobile. We had Harry Placide ; Charlotte Cushman, with whom I had acted as a boy at Alexander's Theater in Glasgow, and who, although I had not seen her since, was gracious enough to remember me ; and Mr. and Mrs. James W. Wallack, Jr., who were stock stars, and played a long engagement in "The Man in the Iron Mask," "Winter's Tale," "Cymbeline," "Ion," and many other legitimate plays.

It was three years before the war, and the South, theatrically, was in a flourishing condition. We played to fashionable and appreciative audiences. Mme. La Vert had her private box at the theater ; she it was who was known as the "Queen of the

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

South," and the people of Mobile would say with pride that she was the only Southern lady who, while in England, was received by Queen Victoria. Mme. La Vert gave several receptions, during our season, to the principal members of our company and the society people of Mobile. The city, at that time, was very beautiful, including a lovely driveway, known as the Shell Road, on which many of our people were often invited to drive. Although the season was midwinter, flowers bloomed and all was summer-like. It being my first experience in the South, this region seemed to me an enchanted land. Each of the principal members of the company was the recipient of a benefit, and all had "bumpers," Mme. La Vert exerting herself to make each a social success. Our season ended, Mr. Duffield spoke to us regarding a reengagement for the next season, but we hoped that we might arrange to be in New York. We went by boat to New Orleans, remaining a few days to view that city. One of the finest and fastest steamboats at that time plying

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

between St. Louis and New Orleans was called the *Pennsylvania*, and we were fortunate in securing a passage on her. It was the first time I had ever seen such a floating palace. The trip to St. Louis occupied a week, and I think that during that time we saw all that could be seen of life on the Mississippi. The service on the boats of this line was excellent; the table offered all the delicacies of the season; there was music and constant card-playing—in fact, every species of gambling. It was our good fortune, also, to witness and participate in a Mississippi River steam-boat race—a thing of which we had read, but which we had never seen. No sooner had we overhauled another steamer similar to our own than we went at it, screeching and roaring, the crew and passengers, even the ladies, dismissing all thought of danger, and only anxious to keep our boat going and to beat her rival. With this in view, everything in the way of fuel that could possibly increase her speed was thrown into the furnaces—wood, fat, tar, anything that could be reached. It was

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

a sight to see the negroes, stripped to the waist, with the glare of the fires on their faces, and to hear the yells and shouts from the boats, as either seemed to gain a slight advantage. For some distance the steamers were so close that an agile person might have stepped from one to the other. At last the *Pennsylvania* forged ahead, and even now I can hear the cheers of our people as we left our antagonist far behind. Not long after this I learned that the *Pennsylvania* had been blown up in a similar race.

This was our first and only protracted stay in the extreme South. I had no opportunity of witnessing the evils of slavery, but I did see much domestic comfort among the colored people, and much content and apparent happiness. I had not, at that time, been long from the old country, and, in common with most others, had devoured Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin"; and, although my experience was limited, I was glad to find many negroes whose position and surroundings were more comfortable and

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

happy than I had supposed them to be. In many instances that came within my observation, slaves were treated with great consideration by their masters. In fact, one Sunday in Mobile Mrs. Stoddart and I were surprised at seeing two stylish equipages driven by colored boys, and with them their "girls." They were all "dressed to kill," and upon inquiry I was told that the "boss" often allowed his "boy" the use of his carriage to take a spin with his sweetheart on the Shell Road. I recall that the colored servants at the house where we lived were frequently invited to go to the theater, and they were never denied the privilege by their employers.

The trip from New Orleans to St. Louis before the war is a portion of my American experience never to be forgotten.

On our arrival in St. Louis we found Mrs. Henry Farren (now Mrs. Erving Winslow), formerly Miss Kate Reynolds, an old friend of my wife's, managing one theater, and Ben De Bar the other. We went to see both, and, after spending a

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

short time with the Farrens, left for Chicago. Mr. and Mrs. Florence were then playing in the latter city, and we saw their performance. We then set out for New York, where, on our arrival, we found everything verdant and summer-like, and having left a similar state of things in the South, it seemed to us strange to have escaped the winter. Although we were glad to be at home again, there seemed little chance of remaining, so we accepted engagements, for the next season, with Mr. John T. Ford at Baltimore, and, in the meantime, went to Montreal for the summer. Mr. Buckland, who had managed the Montreal Theater for many years, was accustomed to begin his seasons at the close of the theatrical season in New York. He was, therefore, always able to engage prominent people. Charles Fisher filled most of his vacations in this way. All the stars played in Montreal. Mrs. Buckland, formerly Kate Horn, played most of the leading business, while Miss Kate Reynolds, D. H. Harkins, W. J. Le Moyne, Charles Hale, George W. Stod-

dart, B. T. Ringgold, and many other well-known performers were members of the company. Charles Mathews was popular, and often acted there, as did also Charles Dillon. English actors were the favorites. There was a change of bill every night, and so the work was heavy. Mr. Mathews had a charming personality —all the company liked him ; but the work with him was more arduous than with any one else, as he generally put on three pieces a night. Yet the Montreal season was thought to be most desirable, enabling those who had saved money during the winter to hold on to their savings, and those who had not to—well, to live. Montreal is a pleasant city. The audiences, in those days, were responsive and the people were friendly. Mr. Buckland always claimed that the weather there was delightfully cool throughout the summer months, but as, when playing long parts, the actor would usually be most uncomfortable, I doubted the veracity of this statement. My brother George played walking gentlemen and juvenile business

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

with Buckland the season before I went there, and, when I turned up at the theater, they told me they were glad to see me, if only for "my son's sake." This mistake was made because they took me for the father of my brother, perhaps because he was playing juvenile parts and I was playing old men. I thought it prudent not to undeceive them; besides, as from my boyhood I had been accustomed to being called "Old Stoddart," I had become reconciled to my supposed antiquity. Buckland's season having ended, we returned to New York, and from there went to Baltimore to enter on our engagement with John T. Ford. Edwin Booth was the first attraction. This was the first time I had ever met him, but I had the pleasure of acting with him afterward at the Winter Garden in New York. He played a long time in Baltimore that season, and I acted with him in all his plays. For a person so eminent and so greatly admired, he was the most gentle, unassuming, unostentatious man I had ever met. I had not been much in tragedy since my younger days with Copeland in



Edwin Booth.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Liverpool and Alexander in Glasgow. So when I was obliged to tackle *Polonius*, *Babantio*, *Gloster*, in "King Lear," etc., I found the study difficult. During this season I participated in an exceedingly interesting performance of "Richard III," with Edwin Booth as *Richard*, and his younger brother, John Wilkes Booth, as *Richmond*. Both performances were superb. I shall never forget the fight between *Richard* and *Richmond* in the last act, an encounter which was terrible in its savage realism.

"The Tempest" was produced during this season, and had quite a long run, Mr. William Davidge being specially engaged for *Caliban*. Mr. Burton played an engagement, and we had professionals with fame: John E. Owens, John Sleeper Clarke, and William Wheatley—the latter from the Arch Street Theater, Philadelphia. Mr. Ford often sent us, to support the above actors, to Washington and Alexandria, one night in one place and the next in the other, according to our relative positions in the various pieces.

Our season was nearly over when Mr.

Dion Boucicault and his wife, Agnes Robertson, came. I was cast for important parts in all their plays, and, I suppose, must have acquitted myself satisfactorily, as Mr. Boucicault spoke to me toward the end of his engagement, telling me of his intention to build a theater in New York, and offering to engage Mrs. Stoddart and me in his company. He said that his theater would be ready in the following autumn, and I told him we should be pleased to accept his offer, provided there was a certainty that the theater would be completed by the time specified. Mr. Ford was desirous that we should return to his house, and I did not wish to decline a renewal of the Baltimore engagement until I saw my way clear for the future. On Boucicault's assurance that his theater would open as soon as Mr. Ford's, I closed the engagement with him. Although we were comfortable in Baltimore, Baltimore was not New York. Moreover, we had been absent from the latter city for two years ; our home was there, and we had been counting the days till we should re-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

turn to it. Mrs. Boucicault, who had acted so much with my father, was kind to me during these days. On one occasion she said to me, in the hearing of Mr. Boucicault: "Mr. Stoddart is very good in this part, and he puts me in mind of his father." I thought it a great compliment. I had seen my father when he was acting with her in some of these pieces, and had admired his acting, not altogether, I hope, from the fact that he was my parent. Mr. Boucicault caused me to feel a little less cheerful by remarking that, in his opinion, my principal fault lay in the fact that I was "always the same" in everything I did. "Stoddart," said he, "is always Stoddart." He then said that an artist—a true artist—should sink his personality, ever leaving the audience in doubt as to his identity. There was some truth, I suppose, in his remarks regarding "Stoddart always being Stoddart"; but having been a stock actor all my life, and having, as a stock actor, of necessity played many different kinds of rôles, it was not very gratifying to be told that I turned up the

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

same old six and eightpence on every occasion. I took this criticism to heart, and tried hard to metamorphose myself somewhat in accordance with it.

That my efforts at change, at least in my personal appearance, were not altogether successful, the following incident may serve to illustrate. At the old Union Square Theater, during the run of "Ferreal," in which I played *Martial*, a gamekeeper who has committed a murder, there is a fine trial scene, in which another person is accused of the crime. The gamekeeper, during this scene, is seated down the stage. He has not many words to say, but can, by facial expression, convey much to the audience. On the first night I put on a heavy beard. After the performance Miss Ida Vernon, who had seen the piece from the front, said to me: "Oh, Mr. Stoddart, what did you wear that abominable beard for? It took away all your expression." The next night the gamekeeper had been shaved.

Again, when we played "Alabama" at the Madison Square Theater, I was *Colonel*

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

*Preston.* I remember discussing the matter with my wife and children one evening before the opening. "How do you think you will be in your Southern dialect?" said one. "Well, I don't know," I replied. "You know I have been in Mobile?" "Well," said my son, "you can alter your face a little this time, anyway. As this character is a colonel and a Southerner, why not appear for once in a mustache?" And so I was persuaded to wear one, thinking that it would alter me and be much in character. I made *Preston* a very old man, wearing a bald white wig and a heavy white mustache. Before the production I dressed at home, as was my custom, and presented myself in costume to my family. "By Jove!" said my son, "I should n't know you." I believed him, for I scarcely knew myself. Upon the opening night, and before the curtain went up, I had adjusted my wig and mustache, when Mr. Augustus Thomas, the author of the play, came into my room. "Ah, governor," he was just beginning, when he noticed my make-up. "Good Lord!" said he, "what

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

have you got on your face?" I ventured to explain that my family were of the opinion, which had also lately become my own, that in every part I undertook I always looked the same, and that "Alabama" presenting a favorable opportunity to alter my face a little, I thought it advisable to wear the mustache. Mr. Thomas would have none of it, and insisted that I should take it off, saying: "God bless you! the people want to see you just as you are." So off it came.

I have often seen one or the other of my associates thoroughly disguised in acting, so that recognition was difficult. I am afraid, though, I should have to change myself to a great extent before I could conceal my identity. It has been my good fortune to meet most of the really great men and women of my profession, and I recall that many of them had unmistakable "mannerisms" and marked personalities; some of them were wonderfully talented, but no one of them ever left the observer for a moment in doubt as to individuality. So I have tried not to worry

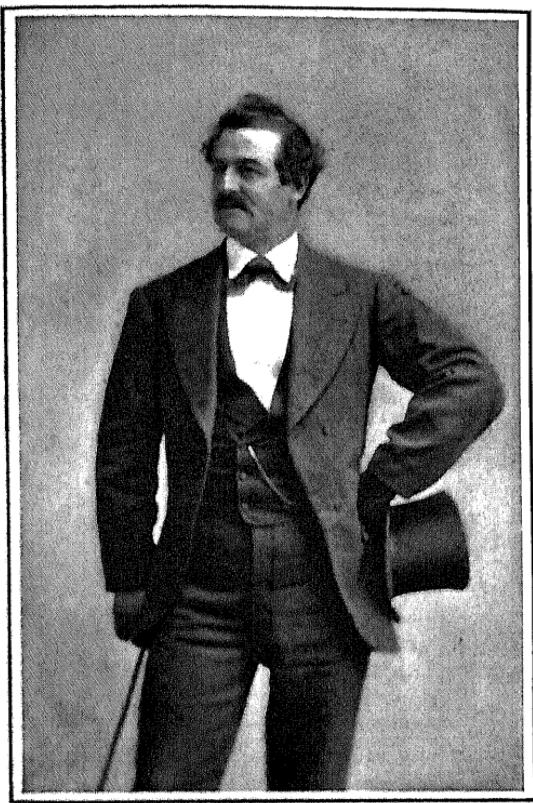
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

over the fact that I am so much like myself.

The Baltimore season closed and we returned to New York. The new theater for Mr. Boucicault, if it had been built, would have stood near the spot where now stands Keith's Theater, formerly the Union Square. I saw Mr. Boucicault, shortly after we arrived, standing on the ground, and he called my attention to what he termed the great desirability of the location. The theater was not built, but instead of a new theater he reconstructed an old one,—the Metropolitan,—which he called the Winter Garden. The interior of this house was made much smaller and was wonderfully improved. The company was a fine one, including Joseph Jefferson, Tom Johnson, Harry Pearson, Dion Boucicault, Mrs. John Wood, Agnes Robertson, Sara Stevens, and others. The theater opened with "Dot," followed by "Smike," —a dramatization of Charles Dickens's story of "Nicholas Nickleby,"—and then came the "Octoroon." Matters did not progress altogether smoothly. Mrs. John

and he and Miss Robertson retired to join Laura Keene. Mr. Jefferson then took hold, directing the affairs of the theater for some time. This theater (the Winter Garden) was managed, at various times, while I continued a member of the company, by Mr. William Stuart and Mr. "Black" Jackson. I remained at the Winter Garden for about two years, acting with Edwin Booth, Charlotte Cushman, Barney Williams, Edward A. Sothern, Frank Chanfrau, and others.

During this time we had saved a few hundred dollars, and, Scotchman-like, I had made up my mind, as soon as circumstances would permit, to try and buy a home for ourselves. Miss Julia Gould, a professional friend of my wife's, had bought land at Macomb's Dam, near High Bridge, which at that time was far out of town. Here she had intended to build, but circumstances had prevented her doing so, and we bought the property. I went to look at it, and was delighted with the loca-



Frank Chaufrau.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

tion. I think I went to view it every day for several months, gloating over our new purchase, the site of our prospective home. There was an old woman living in a shanty on a lot next to ours who was most anxious to sell.

After my mother's death my father had again come to America, and was living with us in Hudson Street at the corner of Leroy. Many and many a time have we walked together to the High Bridge property, admired it, and then walked back. My father, in his sanguine way, would say: "Jim, if you can only raise enough money to secure that old woman's lot, you will have an ideal home, and I don't see why you cannot act and live in it all the year round. The Eighth Avenue cars will take you a long way out, and then the walk for the rest of the way is trifling. I have n't forgotten my trade, my boy [father, it will be remembered, had been apprenticed to a carpenter], and I 'll assist in building your house." I had agreed with the old woman on a price for her property, my father had prepared a plan for a house,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYE

and we were very enthusiastic and ~~co~~  
fident. In a most cheerful frame of mi  
away we went to select a site for the hou

My father had just finished pacing  
the number of feet when there appear  
upon the scene an uncouth young pers  
who said to my father : "Look here, ' ' man, what are you doing?" My fatl  
said : "Jim, you had better talk to hir  
I endeavored to explain that it was ' intention to build a small house, but  
interrupted me with : "Yes, I have ~~be~~  
watching you both bobbing around ~~h~~  
for some time and trying to get my motl  
to sell you her lot ; but that lot ain't ~~h~~  
it 's mine, and it ain't for sale. You ~~v~~  
have a high old time if you try to put  
any house near me. And if I find you ~~z~~  
that old scalawag"—indicating my fat.  
—"coming around my mother, trying  
get that lot away from me, I 'll pu  
bullet into the pair of you."

I do not remember our reply to ~~t~~  
polite young gentleman, but I do re  
that we lost little time in leaving ~~H~~  
Bridge and its beautiful surroundi

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

My father, when we had reached Eighth Avenue, said, his views regarding the desirability of High Bridge as a residential district in the meantime having completely changed : "Jim, I don't think it will do ; that fellow means what he says. Besides, it is really a long way out. I don't see how you could possibly act and live so far from the theater." How characteristic of the man ! Some years after I sold the lots to Mr. Charles Hale, in those days a well-known actor.

I had, however, no intention of giving up the idea of acquiring a home. It so happened that one morning soon afterward we read in the "Herald" an attractive advertisement from which it appeared that a Mr. William Elton had purchased a portion of the estate of Gouverneur Morris, of the well-known New York family of that name. This he had laid out into lots, which he proposed selling "on the instalment plan." He called his property "Wilton," and it comprised about five or six acres of land situated between One Hundred and Thirty-sixth

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and One Hundred and Thirty-eighth streets, and bounded on the east by what is now the Boulevard and on the west by St. Ann's Avenue, then known as Cherry Lane. Through it, at that time, also flowed a pretty little stream, which has now become Brook Avenue.

Mrs. Stoddart and I went out to see Mr. Elton. He at once recognized my wife. He was associated with Mr. Strong, a publisher doing business in Nassau Street, and had been one of the constant patrons of Mitchell's Olympic Theater in the old days, and therefore he remembered my wife and all the Olympic favorites.

I thought myself in luck, he met us so pleasantly. I made known to him my plan, and was advised to take six lots in One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street. He would let me have them, he said, on the crest of the hill overlooking Port Morris, the cream of the property. Mr. Elton walked with us to show the lots. I do not think I had ever seen a more beautiful site. The time was spring ; the roads and lanes were lined with cherry-trees, all

# MITCHELL'S OLYMPIC EXTRa.

ARRIVAL OF THE KINGS OF EUROPE.

MONDAY, MAY 15th, 1848.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE  
FROM  
New Jersey.



ARRIVAL OF THE  
STEAMBOAT ESSEX.

The steamboat Essex, Captain Whipple, was reengaged  
on Saturday last, the 12th, made the passage from  
Europe to New York, and are now en route to New York, to  
arrive on the 15th instant.

The company of the Essex have been in a state of  
constant excitement ever since a report, that she had  
been captured by pirates, was made known to the public.

The apprehension had somewhat abated, when the Capt. said  
in a speech, at our last general meeting, we should be  
at New York on the 15th instant, and the Master, in his speech  
and others, that Brooklyn was the destined and  
safest place in the harbor.

**SINGULAR ACCIDENT.**—A Mr. West, who had been sent  
from Philadelphia on the steamer's arrival in New York, was  
met at the pier by a Mr. Smith, who had been sent to New York  
to bring him home. The two men were engaged in a  
series of fierce and violent contention, when both  
were struck down. The accident occurred at the  
State of New Jersey. The individuals living in the neighborhood  
of the steamer were struck with a sense of great con-  
cern respecting the passengers. Two men were being  
brought to the steamer to assist in the removal of the  
injured man to a hospital in New York.

## BROADWAY.

The information concerning the arrival of Kings of Europe  
arrived. But the character of the individuality by the last  
announced, was not and had been in the ranks of demagogues,  
members of a fraudulent character have been raised in  
the ranks of the nobility. The question being  
whether or not the nobility of Europe, and the aristocracy present  
in America, will be willing to yield to this party, or  
whether this revolutionary movement will be quelled, as  
these names convey suspicion on the part of the populace, per-  
adultry of the foreign monarchies, to reverse the blockade.

## ASTOR PLACE OPERA HOUSE.

The Astor Place Opera House has been closed for some time  
to accommodate the new building. It is said the new  
theatre will be completed in the month of June, and  
will be opened to the public on the 1st of July.

The offices of Brooklyn, some time ago, anticipated a  
bridge opportunity of the East River, which would connect  
the two Dominions of America. The question being  
whether or not the bridge would be built, and the time of its  
completion, pertained to the fact that they had a bridge already  
over the Hudson River. The cost of this was well enough to  
justify the bridge.

## BROADWAY.

The important spot of interest at length reached this  
important question. A list of revolutionaries has been  
published in view from Palms Party in the Walkers, and as  
affidavit who have been added to the two already mentioned.

The offices of Brooklyn, some time ago, anticipated a  
bridge opportunity of the East River, which would connect  
the two Dominions of America. The question being  
whether or not the bridge would be built, and the time of its  
completion, pertained to the fact that they had a bridge already  
over the Hudson River. The cost of this was well enough to  
justify the bridge.

## WILLIAMSBURG.

We have no idea of what the results were of the  
work. By the Republicans everything was taught.

## COMMERCIAL.

Books were not as high as price, but authors would  
have a greater portion of the expenses.

Some of the price books will be the  
same as in the field books.

# MITCHELL'S OLYMPIC Theatre.

Doors will open at 7 o'clock, and the curtain rise at half-past 7.

First Night of A NEW LOCAL RETRAVAGANZA, written  
expressly for this Theatre, entitled an

## Olympic Extra

Monday Ev'ng, May 15, 1848.

To commence with a Comic Opep, 1700 West.

## LAVATER

### THE PHYSIONOMIST.

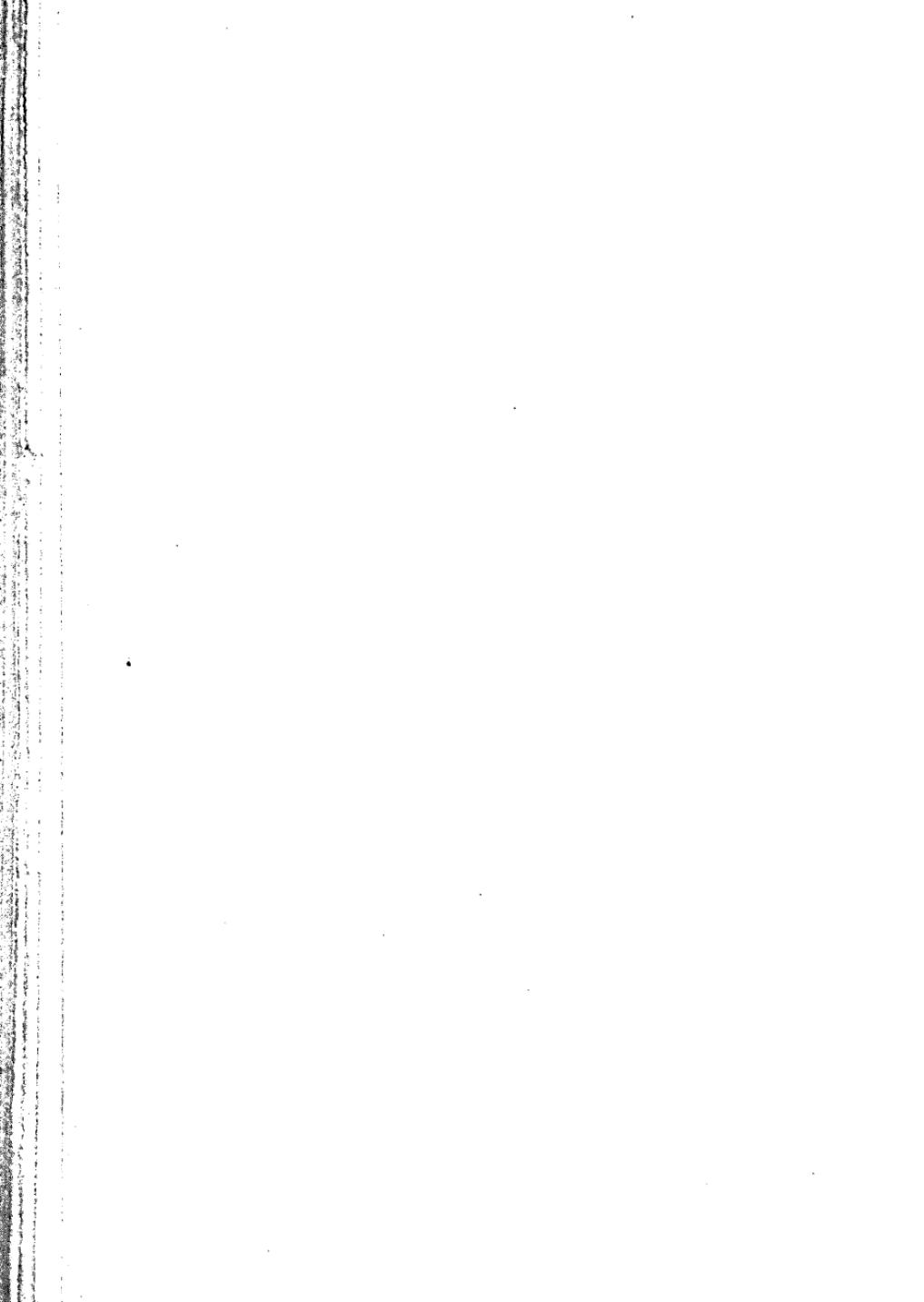
Master Brian, of Darganmore..... Mr. Holland

John Everett Lester, Old Peppermint..... Mr. Hollan

Uncle Grimes, Old Peppermint..... Mr. Hollan

Uncle Grimes, Old Peppermint..... Mr. Hollan

Curious, Old Peppermint..... Mr. Hollan



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

in bloom. Gouverneur Morris's mansion stood on the right and Mr. Crane's villa on the left, with the little St. Ann's Church near by. The Brother Islands showed in full view in the Sound. It was all very beautiful, and a sight long to be remembered. It was from here that we saw the *Great Eastern* when she came to America after her first trip.

We lost no time in buying the property. I think we were to pay two hundred and fifty dollars per lot. As we had only one hundred dollars, Mr. Elton kindly agreed to accept that amount, and to receive the rest in instalments, giving us a little book in which he would credit the sums we should pay as the payments were made. This was in the spring of 1859. We went home rejoicing, and week after week I journeyed out to Wilton and gave Mr. Elton as much money on account as I could spare. My wife had a friend who had advised us to build, and he offered to meet the payments necessary for that purpose as they fell due, taking a mortgage on the property as security. I availed

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

myself of his kind offer, and made my contracts for building. I was to pay two thousand dollars for the work. I also made a contract to dig a well, at seventy-five cents a foot for excavating dirt and five dollars a foot if excavation should have to be made through rock. When the house was under way and the first payment due, my wife's friend wrote to say that circumstances would make it impossible for him to advance the money as agreed, and at the same time word was sent to us that after digging out a few feet of earth the contractor had encountered rock in the well. Here was disappointment. I thought my second attempt to secure a home was not only a failure, but also that I should find myself deeply in debt. But "it 's a long lane that has no turning," and honesty of purpose usually comes out all right in the end.

On explaining our position to Mr. Elton, he told us to go ahead with our house and that he would foot the bills. He did so, and thus, in the spring of 1860, we were enabled to move into our new home.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

I was happy in being able in a small way to repay Mr. Elton for his kindness, for I was instrumental in bringing others of my profession to Wilton. Milnes Le-vick bought property and built there, as did also Edwin Eddy, Mark Smith, Henry F. Daly, Mr. and Mrs. France, and others. I being the pioneer, Mr. Elton gave me the credit of bringing them all to his property. We lived in Wilton for seven years, part of my Winter Garden career, and a great part of the time while I was with Laura Keene and Mrs. John Wood.

The journey from the theater to my home was long and in those days tedious. It took an hour and a half to reach Wilton by way of the Third Avenue street-cars from Bleecker Street to Harlem Bridge, which was, of itself, in the old horse-cars, quite a journey, added to which was the discomfort of frequently having to stand up all the way. On reaching the bridge, the worst of our journey was yet to come, for, there being then no means of conveyance on the other side of the river, we had a walk of about a mile and a half

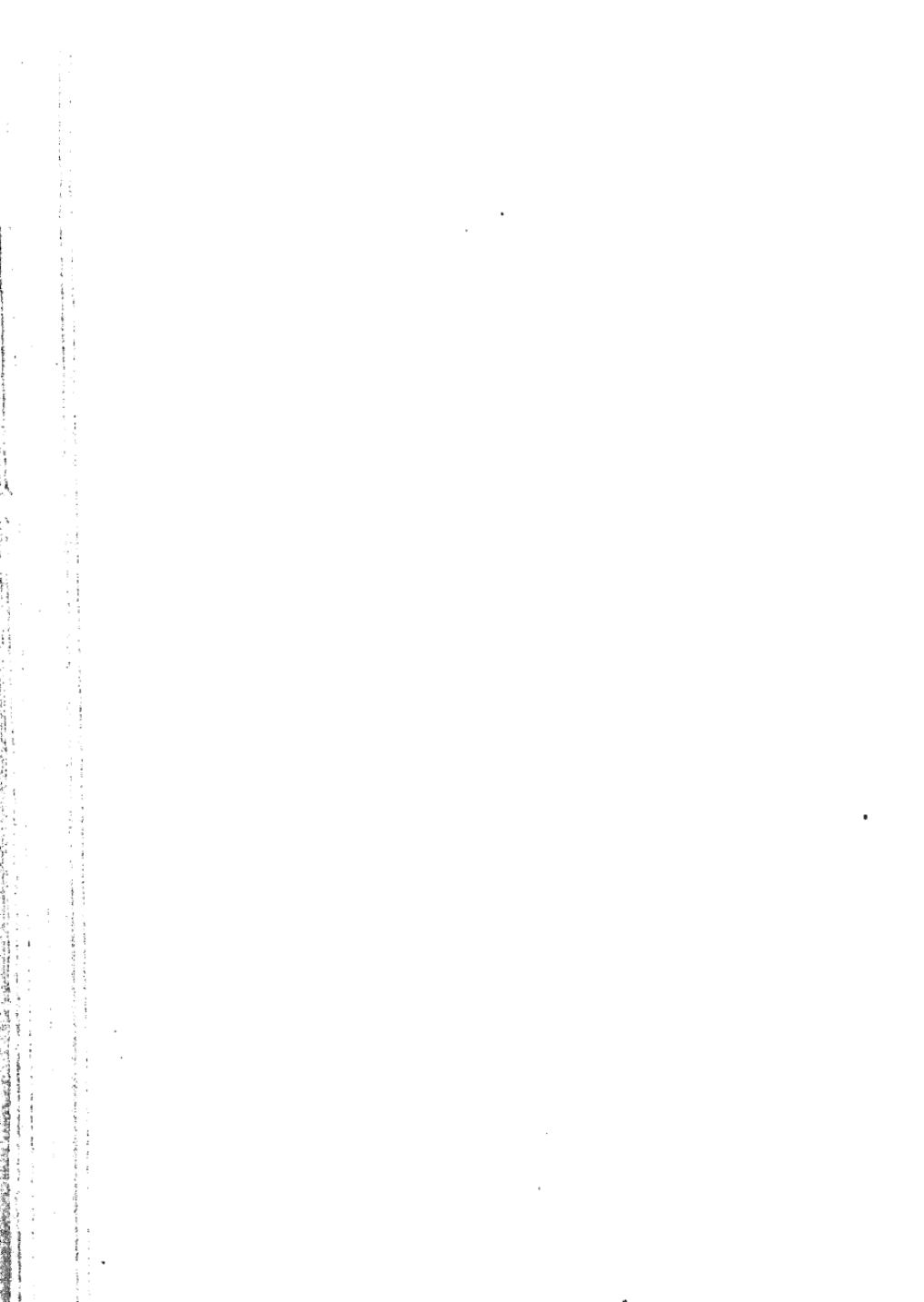
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

before reaching our house. I thought very little of it at that time, but now, as I look back upon those days, I wonder how we ever accomplished the task. We had to face this journey in all sorts of weather. Mrs. Stoddart, for a time, also was obliged to endure a like hardship ; but as my position improved, we decided that it was better she should leave the stage, and so thereafter I trudged up the road alone. In all weathers, by moonlight, in darkness, in rain and snow, for seven years, I nightly pursued my pilgrimage from the theater down-town and up this roadway. I was resolved that nothing should stand in the way of accomplishing my purpose of having a home of my own, and not being able to afford it in the city, this was the best thing I could do.

During this time I encountered two very disagreeable experiences. One was in the month of March, 1862. I was with Laura Keene, and on one night there was a tremendous snow-storm. After the performance, the storm had become so fierce and the snow so deep that no cars ran



*Laura Keene.*



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

upon the Third Avenue line. I stood with Charles Peters, James G. Burnett, and Miss Coulcock, who all lived in Yorkville, at the corner of Bleecker Street and the Bowery, waiting, but in vain, for a car. At last we started to walk, hoping a car would overtake us ; but none came, and we kept on until we reached Yorkville, looking as though we had arrived from the arctic regions. We saw Miss Coulcock to her home, and Burnett and Peters did all they could to persuade me to remain with them until the morning. I knew, however, that my wife would be worrying about me, so I pushed on and walked the remainder of the distance to Wilton. I arrived at home at four o'clock in the morning, and was a sight to behold. I had on a loose talma coat, which stood out as stiff as a board, and my hair and eyebrows were covered with ice. After having taken a glass of hot grog, I felt little the worse for my venture, although many people would think it an undertaking to walk from Bleecker Street to One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street, even

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

on a pleasant day. The next morning the sun came out in all his glory, the sky cleared, and soon scarcely a vestige of the storm was to be seen.

On another occasion during my stay at Wilton, while I was going home on a dark night, I heard footsteps approaching me from behind, a thing that always made me uncomfortable. I accelerated my speed, and so did the person following me. It was so dark and lonely that I did not know exactly what might occur, and I thought I would get rid of my pursuer by crossing to the other side of the street. He dogged my footsteps, however, never speaking a word, nor did I, until we came to Cherry Lane and the burying-ground of St. Ann's Church. Then he crossed over to my side of the way and approached nearer. I must say I felt very creepy. He was tall, with a pale face, and he wore a slouched hat, and had his arms crossed upon his breast, his hands in the inner pockets rattling something that sounded like keys. For some time he did not speak, but at last he said, "You are not

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

afraid of me, are you?" I felt my hair gradually rising, but managed to say that as I had never done any one any wrong, I ought not to fear. He then told me he had been confined in an asylum, and that people thought him mad, but that he was not. I now made sure that the supposed keys were fetters. However, by this time I had reached my own gate, which, as I opened, he tried to enter. I succeeded in getting inside and closing the gate, but he still persisted in endeavoring to get in. I told him that he could not, as he would frighten my wife. "Ask her if I can't come in," he said. I eluded him, however, the door of the house was opened, I bolted in, and quickly fastened the door. For more than an hour he walked up and down on the piazza, to our great discomfort. My wife's brother, who was visiting us, and was a strong fellow, who had been a number of years at sea, and therefore bolder than I was, volunteered to get rid of the intruder, and, going out with a stout stick, drove him away. Next morning we learned that the houses of two of our

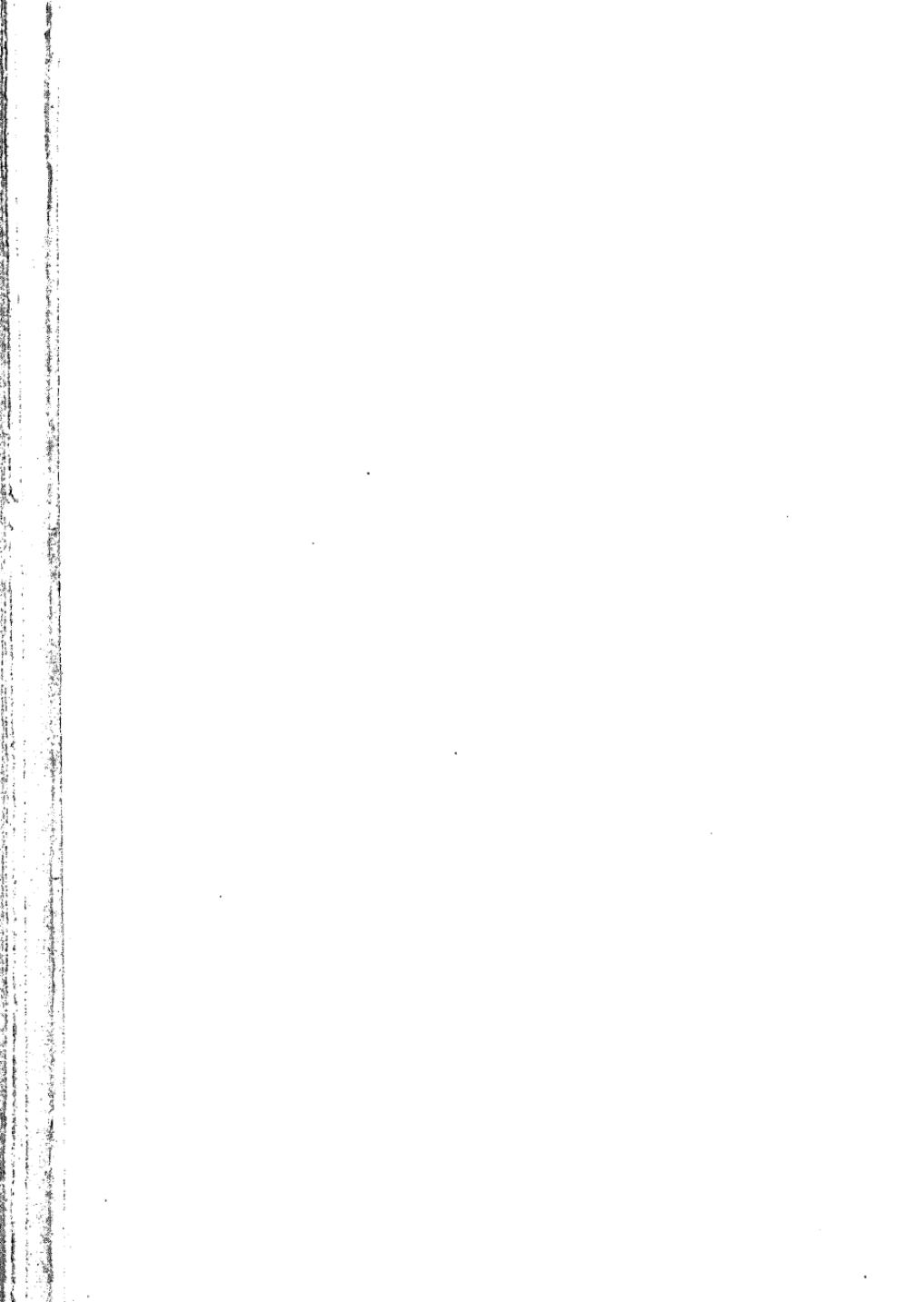
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

neighbors had been broken into and robbed, and although we had no positive proof, we suspected that my road companion was the burglar.

This was my early experience of Wilton. In time the place grew a little, Mr. Le-vick building next to me, Mr. Eddy below him, and Mr. France putting up a house, as did Mr. Daly. Mark Smith sold his lots. There were others of the theatrical profession who located there, and the place came to be known locally as "Actorsville." In the course of time my cottage became, in its modest way, a beautiful place. I planted trees and many shrubs and vines, and had a little orchard of dwarf pears, and a trellis of grapes around three sides of the house. Moreover, the position of itself was so rural you could have imagined yourself miles and miles from New York. My two little chaps were born here. The house stood on a hill overlooking the Sound, and, despite the long tramp from Bleecker Street, I always felt well repaid for my fatigue by seeing the light in the window which served as a beacon to guide



William Mitchell.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

me to the home I had struggled so hard to obtain and so greatly loved.

That I was the owner even of so modest an estate filled me with pride. I thought I should never leave it; but ah, how little we know of the future! Mrs. Stoddart's health began to fail, and as the doctor told me that the brackish air from the Sound was injurious to her, she suffering from asthma, I decided that we must leave the place. A person living at West Farms had taken a fancy to our property and was anxious to purchase it. At first I scouted the idea, but as my wife's health was now the main consideration, I finally yielded, and sold the place. We then returned to New York.

Not long ago I felt a desire to have a look at the old house, and journeyed thither for the purpose. When I built it, in 1859, there was, from Mott's Foundry at the north end of Harlem Bridge to my own cottage, scarcely a house, where now, all along Third Avenue (then known as Boston Road) and up One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Street, there are stores and

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

flats, while in the streets which were then little more than country roads are now seen the modern electric cars. All the beautiful old cherry-trees have been razed to the ground, and where once flowed the pretty little brook there is now an avenue lined with buildings, the abode of hundreds of people. My cottage still stands, but it is overshadowed on each side by five-story brick flat-houses. The little St. Ann's Church was the only thing left to remind me of the Wilton that I had known. My son, who was born there, but left at too tender an age to remember much of its beauty, and who had heard me speak so often of it, accompanied me, and found it hard to realize that this busy thoroughfare, with its throngs of people, covered the spot where had been the first country home of his father.

I remained with Laura Keene until she retired from the theater, when Mrs. John Wood became the new manager. She changed the name to the Olympic. Previous to entering upon her new venture, she played for a time with Mr. Jefferson

# OLYMPIC

622 AND 624 BROADWAY.

LESSON AND DIRECTRESS,

**MRS. JOHN WOOD**  
STAGE MANAGER J. H. SELWYN

ANOTHER ENTIRE

## CHANGE OF PROGRAMME

## TWO NEW PIECES

**MRS. JOHN WOOD!**      **MRS. JOHN WOOD!!**

FOR THE SECOND TIME AS THE

## PRETTY WIDOW OF THE MILL

Second night in America of an entirely new and  
**ORIGINAL COMIC PIECE.**

The Orchestra will play the following music, arranged by and under the direction of . . . . .

**THOMAS BAKER**

**OVERTURE**, "Der Freischütze" . . . . .      **W. Baker**  
**GIFT POLKA**, with accompaniment of **Musik** . . . . .      **Baker**  
**PLAY**, with a dancing prelude . . . . .      "We're great," "I'm leaving  
this in sorrow, Alaska," "I'm off to Charleston," "Ever of thee," etc.      **Baker**

**Tuesday Evening, Jan. 12th, 1864.**

The entertainments will commence with

**FOR THE SECOND TIME IN AMERICA**  
an entirely new and original Comic Piece, in two acts, called

# A BULL IN CHINA SHOP!

Mr. Tipthorpe . . . . .      Mr. W. Davidge  
Mr. Tipthorpe's Son . . . . .      Mr. J. H. Stoddart  
Mr. Tipthorpe's Daughter . . . . .      Mr. G. E. Beckis  
Mr. Tipthorpe's Wife . . . . .      Mr. T. Owen  
Mr. Bellamy Brownjohn, late Major of the Melbourne Bocce Range . . . . .

Emily, Tipthorpe's Wife . . . . .      Mr. J. M. Stewart  
Lucy, Tipthorpe's Daughter . . . . .      Miss S. S. Sloss  
Susan . . . . .      Miss De Lacey  
Arabella Fitz-Kensington . . . . .      Miss J. Walters  
Scene—TIPTHORPE'S HOUSE. Time—THE PRESENT DAY.

After which,

**FOR THE SECOND TIME,**  
the elegant and laughable Comedy, entitled,

# COUSIN CHERRY

Charles, Earl of Mandeville . . . . .      Mr. G. H. Clarke  
Thomas Primrose . . . . .      Mr. J. H. Stoddart  
Jacob Primrose . . . . .      Mr. M. C. Lawrence  
Cousin Cherry, wife of the Earl . . . . .      Mr. John Wood  
Eliza Primrose . . . . .      Mrs. Sedley Brown

In active preparation and will speedily be produced with New Scenery, Appointments, &c., the  
excellent and extravagant Burlesque of

# MAZEPHA

In which  
**MR. FRANK DREW**

Will make his first appearance this season.

Doors open at 7. Performances commence at a quarter to 8.

OPERA GLASSES ON HIRE IN THE LOBBY.

### PRICES OF ADMISSION.

Box Seats and Parquet . . . . .	50 Cents   Balcony Chairs . . . . .	75 Cents
Family Circle . . . . .	35 Cents   Orchestra Chairs . . . . .	50 Cents
Private Boxes . . . . .		50, 60, and 75 Cents



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

at the Winter Garden, and I was a member of their company during a successful season. I had hoped that Mr. Jefferson would have been associated with Mrs. Wood in her new enterprise, but it did not so happen, for when they parted he went to California and afterward to Australia.

Mrs. Wood's career at the Olympic was a brilliant one, and many clever people were engaged for her company. There were E. L. Davenport, William Holston, James Lewis, William Davidge, Kate Newton, Eliza Newton, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, J. B. Studley, George Boniface, Edward Lamb, George Fawcett Rowe, J. K. Mortimer, and others. Mr. John H. Selwyn was the stage-manager and J. E. Hayes the scenic artist. Mrs. Wood managed the theater for three years, and during that time produced a variety of pieces, including comedies, burlesques, dramas, etc. Everything was finely put on the stage, the scenery being specially worthy of notice, as Mr. Hayes was a most expert and accomplished scenic painter. Some

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

of his transformation scenes were astonishingly effective. The "Streets of New York," with J. K. Mortimer as *Badger*, enjoyed a long run, as did also "Monte Cristo," with E. L. Davenport in the principal part. James Lewis made his first appearance in New York, with Mrs. Wood, at this theater, as did Mrs. G. H. Gilbert. I was worked into all the pieces produced, and even was compelled, on one or two occasions, to tackle a singing part, much to my disgust and, I have no doubt, to the discomfort of the audience, as I have never been gifted with vocal talent. On a later occasion at the theater, when "Rip Van Winkle" was produced by Mr. Jefferson after his return from England in 1866, during rehearsal of the chorus in the first act, beginning "Mein Herr van Dunk, he never got drunk," etc., the leader of the orchestra, Thomas Baker, not being satisfied with the volume of sound produced from the stage, became irritated, and called upon all performers to sing louder. Taking my cue from this, I pulled out most vociferously, and, I presume, as usual, was

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

not anywhere near the key, for Mr. Baker vociferated : "I said *all* SING, *but not you*, Mr. Stoddart."

Mrs. Wood's productions of "Martin Chuzzlewit" and "Our Mutual Friend" were among her most successful ventures.

As *Bailey*, the boy at Mrs. Todgers's, in the former play, Mrs. Wood found a part in which she reveled. She was the life and spirit of the play. Mrs. Gilbert as *Sairey Gamp* and Charles Parsloe as *Betsy Prigg* were also happily cast. Humphrey Bland gave a wonderfully effective impersonation of *Jonas Chuzzlewit*, and I have not yet forgotten his intensity in the murder scene, or his catlike manner, taking off his shoes and creeping out of the house into the road where walked his victim. Davidge, too, was excellent as *Old Martin Chuzzlewit*, and I think I added something to my reputation by my performance of *Pecksniff*. Altogether, in my opinion, it was one of the company's best performances. Equally good was the production of "Our Mutual Friend." The mill scene was, at that time, thought to be a wonder-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ful piece of effective realism, and even in these progressive days the beauty of the scenery which Hayes produced would, I think, be greatly admired. I append the cast of characters:

BELLA WILFER . . . . .	<i>Mrs. John Wood</i>
MRS. BOFFIN . . . . .	<i>Miss Harris</i>
LIZZIE HEXHAM . . . . .	<i>Kate Newton</i>
CHARLIE HEXHAM . . . . .	<i>Louisa Myers</i>
MRS. WILFER . . . . .	<i>Mrs. Gilbert</i>
SILAS WEGG . . . . .	<i>George Fawcett Rowe</i>
JOHN HARMON . . . . .	<i>J. W. Albaugh</i>
EUGENE WRAYBURN . . . . .	<i>George Boniface</i>
MORTIMER LIGHTWOOD . . . . .	<i>Charles Rockwell</i>
ROGUE RIDERHOOD . . . . .	<i>J. B. Studley</i>
GAFFER HEXHAM . . . . .	<i>Charles Morton</i>
MR. VENUS . . . . .	<i>T. J. Hind</i>
MR. BOFFIN . . . . .	<i>J. H. Stoddart</i>

Charles Morton, mentioned above, was afterward long identified with the production of the "Black Crook."

Another good production was "The Three Guardsmen." The cast included George Fawcett Rowe, Studley, Boniface, Mrs. Wood, Kate Newton, and Mme. Methua Schiller. I played the part of *Richelieu*, and I remember I received quite

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

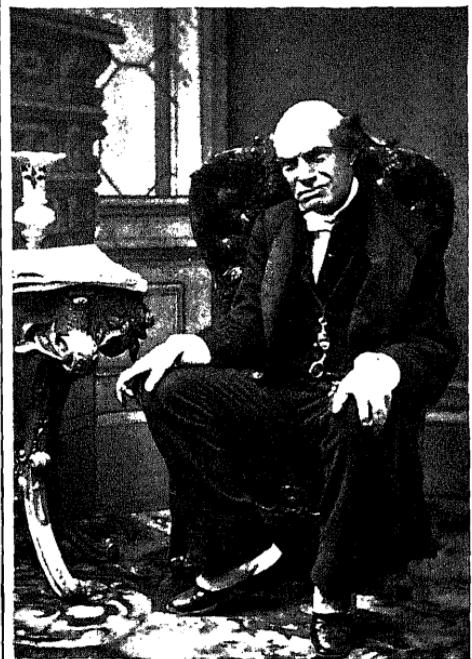
a scoring from the press. I do not think it was deserved, for the character, as it appears in "The Three Guardsmen," is that of a young man, a disagreeable, heavy part, and a thankless one. Some of the papers absurdly attempted to compare my performance with Mr. Booth's *Richelieu* in Bulwer's play, which was a different matter; but I received what I considered justice from an unexpected quarter—the "Police Gazette," which pointed out the absurdity of the comparison.

During Mrs. Wood's second season Augustin Daly produced a comedy called "Taming a Butterfly," a clever piece. He was at that time of the staff of the New York "Times," and I remember his reading the play to the company. Mrs. Wood, I think, stood alone in a certain line of characters. She was immensely popular, and much liked and respected by her company. While she managed the Olympic it was conducted in a thoroughly artistic way; she was a power in herself, liberal in her views, and spared no expense that she deemed necessary to the proper

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

conduct of her theater. I was with her during the three years of her management, and her retirement from it caused great regret, not only on the part of the public, but also to all her associates.

After Mrs. Wood retired Mr. Leonard Grover took possession of the house, and several members of the company continued with him, of whom I was one. Mr. Charles Barron came from Boston to join us ; Stuart Robson was also a member. "The Huguenot Captain" and other plays were performed. Mr. Grover's dramatic season was of short duration, and an operatic company was soon brought into the theater. Before that event Mr. George Jordan, after a long absence from New York, was brought from London, making his reappearance in a drama played by Mr. Fechter called "The Master of Ravenswood," being a new version of the old play "The Bride of Lammermoor." It was a fine production, but a dismal failure. Jordan, who had been so popular at one time, was received in the coldest manner, and he seemed to feel it keenly, for after the



Mr. Stoddart as *Moneypenny*.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

play's brief run he returned to England, where not long afterward he died. Following "The Master of Ravenswood," Boucicault's drama of "The Long Strike" was produced. I had some disagreeable words with Mr. Grover in consequence of his having cast me for the part of *Moneypenny* in this play. I had read the criticisms on the London production of the piece, and Mr. Emery, who played *Noah Learoyd*, was highly commended. As he occupied in London the same position as I did with Mr. Grover,—that of character actor,—I considered that it was not proper for Mr. Charles Wheatleigh to play the part of *Noah*, for which he was specially engaged. I thought it unjust, and said so; but the manager would not alter his decision. After the first performance I was glad that he had not done so. In searching for some means of making the part of *Moneypenny* as effective as possible, I hit upon a nervous, crabbed, and fidgety way of playing it that made the character stand out and did me more good, in the way of advancement, than anything I had previously

done. Mr. Wheatleigh was capital as *Noah Learoyd*, and so it turned out that Mr. Grover knew better how to cast the play than I did.

"The Long Strike" was a success; McKee Rankin, James Ward, Charles Vandenhoff, and Kate Newton played in it, and contributed largely thereto. Our manager had arranged to bring in his opera company, and we had to give place. It so happened that Mr. Tilly Haynes, the proprietor of the theater in Springfield, Massachusetts, witnessed a performance of "The Long Strike," and being pleased with it, he sent a note to my dressing-room inquiring if, on our closing in New York, we would bring the play to Springfield for a week. Our season at the Olympic having been brought thus abruptly to an end, we were all glad of this chance to prolong it, so we got together and agreed to start out on our own account, as a sort of a commonwealth. We opened in Springfield, and played to fine business for a week. Afterward we visited all of the New England cities, making a long season, and

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

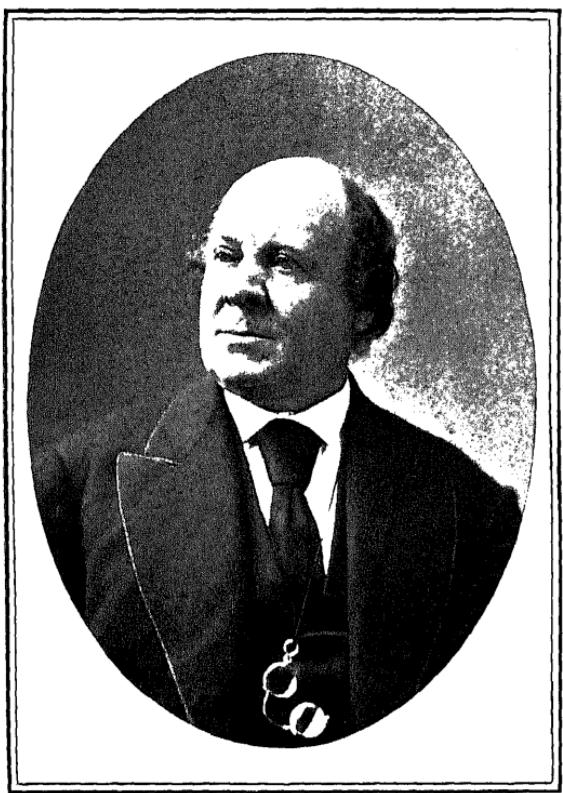
returned to New York rather better off than if we had been employed there all the winter.

After leaving Wilton, and in pursuance of my ruling passion, I had made another venture and bought a small farm near Rahway, in New Jersey. I was still bent on having a country home, but this time we had decided on living in the city during the winter months. We had not resided long in the city when we lost our elder boy; and having an idea that had we remained in Wilton we might have escaped so great an affliction, and fearing that something similar might befall our other children, we determined to make the country our permanent home. We therefore took up our residence at "Avenel," as the farm was called, where we remained for twenty years.

I rejoined Mr. Wallack in 1867, remaining with him for seven years, and all that time living at Avenel. My opening part at Wallack's (the house afterward called the Star, and recently razed) was *Marall* in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," in which

*reach*—a masterly performance. When a youngster in Aberdeen I had played *Marryat* with Gustavus V. Brooke, and his performance made a great impression on me; but Mr. Davenport's impersonation, I think, was equally great with that of Brooke. Mr. John Gilbert played all the principal old men, and therefore I found myself allotted to a line of eccentric characters, splendid parts, but such as I never had expected to be called upon to play. Some of them were *Acres* in "The Rivals," *Doctor Ollapod* in "The Poor Gentleman," and *Doctor Pangloss* in "The Heir-at-Law." Not having had the advantage of a classical education, I dreaded *Pangloss*, filled as it is with quotations from the dead languages. However, I obtained a letter of introduction to a skilled linguist, who coached me in the pronunciation and meaning of the Greek and Latin quotations, and as no fault was found with my efforts, I presume I could not have been altogether bad.

I often wonder how I succeeded in mas-



John Gilbert.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

tering the words of all those parts. Living as I did in the country, I was a commuter on the railroad, and during all the time I attended to my duties at the theater, including rehearsals, after which I went by street-car to the ferry for Jersey City, and then, nightly, by train to the station at Rahway, which was distant from my home about two miles. There my man would meet me, sometimes with a carriage, and at others, when the roads were bad, with an extra saddle-horse, on which I would ride home—sometimes arriving there as late as two o'clock in the morning. And this I did for twenty years. Many of my associates at the theater frequently said that they would not go through such an experience for all the farms in New Jersey. Alas! many of them are dead, and I scarcely need say that I am much alive yet.

I had been so fortunate with my few pear-trees at Wilton that now, being in possession of about forty acres, the opportunity presented itself to go into it "big," and I resolved to do so. I read all sorts

of agricultural literature—"Ten Acres Enough" and "Pear Culture for Profit," written by Mr. Quinn, who lived on Professor Mapes's old place at Waverly, New Jersey. I understood that Quinn had a splendid pear orchard, and pear culture was my ambition, so off I went to interview him. He took me through his pear orchard—a grand sight, thousands of trees all in bloom. I was enchanted. As Mr. Quinn was a theater-goer, he knew me, and I having told him of my ambition to become a pear-grower, and having asked his advice, he gave me good counsel as to what varieties to plant. I explained that it was my purpose, when the orchard became sufficiently remunerative, and I had reached the age of sixty years, to leave the stage, and to pass the evening of my days in attending to the marketing of my fruit, in communion with my family, and at peace with all mankind. Mr. Quinn thought my plan an excellent one, and advised me to plant only two varieties of pears, the Bartlett and the Duchess d'Angoulême, telling me that I could grow the latter as easily

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

as potatoes, and that in the market they were worth five dollars a barrel. I was delighted, and flew home to Mrs. Stoddart, growing enthusiastic over my interview with Mr. Quinn. She thought there might be something in it, but did not take the same rosy view of the matter that I did. It was her idea that I should plant a few at first and see how they turned out. "Why, my dear," I said, "that would be of no use at all ; it is the great quantity planted, and all coming into bearing at the same time, that is going to do the trick."

Mrs. Stoddart was always the treasurer, and seeing my anxiety, she fell into my views, dear soul, as she always did, and surrendered what cash we had on hand available to my project. I ordered pear-trees by the thousands. We planted our orchard on a beautiful eastern slope where we could overlook it from our veranda, and when all was completed I surveyed the work with satisfaction, saying to my wife : "There, my dear ; by the time I am sixty our orchard will be in full bearing,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and then I need act no more." Ah, the fallacy of human hopes! At seventy-four I am still acting. The orchard—well, the orchard has gone.

Charles Thorne's brother Ned had a place at Toms River where he used to breed dogs. Charles would go down there, select those that caught his fancy, and bring them up to New York. Knowing I had a farm, he said I ought to have a dog, and he gave me one—a Gordon setter. Stuart Robson and he were at the time enthusiastic regarding the production of "The Two Men of Sandy Bar," a dramatization of Bret Harte's story that Robson had bought. I was selected to play the part of *Sandy*. Both Thorne and Robson said to me: "Stoddart, *for luck* call your dog 'Sandy.'" And I did. I took him out to my homestead a pup, and he remained there until he died of old age. Thorne had a beautiful Skye terrier called Jack, a small shaggy creature with long hair like silk. You could scarcely tell his head from his tail. He valued him very much, and when we started on our travels he asked

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

me to care for him at my farm until our return. I did ; but Jack, who had lived in a parlor and was washed and combed every day, became dreadfully metamorphosed when he rambled with Sandy through the Jersey mud, so much so that when Thorne came out to the farm to take him back to New York he scarcely knew him. I felt ashamed, myself, of Jack's appearance ; and, to add to our discomfort, the dog insisted on treating Thorne as a stranger, greeting him with sullen growls. "I don't want him," said Thorne ; "you may keep him." And we did for years.

Sandy and Jack ever held a warm place in our affections. After my long journey from the theater, the ill-assorted pair were always on hand, late as it was, to give me a joyous welcome. Sandy passed his life with us, and we all mourned his loss as keenly as if he had been a member of the family.

To return to my farming : I pitched in manfully every moment I could spare, and was always to be seen, hoe in hand, among my trees. Year after year it was my cus-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

tom to leave the farm early in the morning for rehearsal at the theater, after which I would return home, remaining there only a short time, and again retracing my steps to the city for the evening's performance, closing my day's work by the midnight trip home again. I had by this time an important position in the theater —long parts in nearly every piece, and a frequent change of program. I have of late so often been nervous and ill at ease, in spite of having ample time for study and weeks of preparation in rehearsal, that I have wondered how I got through the work in those days, under the circumstances that I have mentioned. Perhaps it was because I was then forty and in the prime of life.

In all the years I lived upon my farm and took those long journeys, I never failed but once of being on time for my duty at the theater. This was during the run of "Rosedale" at Wallack's, in which I was playing *Bunberry Cobb*, a part originally acted by Mr. George Holland. My train was on time, but something happened

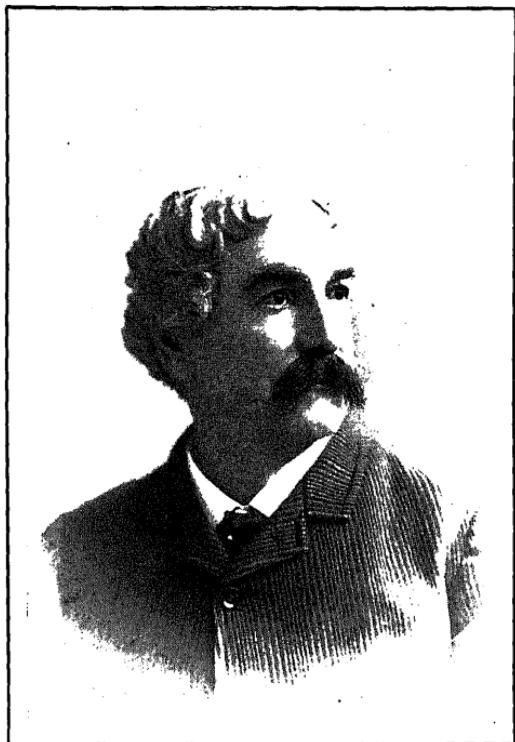
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

to the ferry-boat which caused us to flounder and float about in the North River. It got to be a quarter to eight, then eight, then quarter-past eight o'clock, and I was distracted. I rushed first to the captain, then to the engineer. "I am," I said, "an actor; I belong to Wallack's. Oh, can't you do something to get me ashore? My absence may interfere with the entire performance." The captain was too busy about his boat to listen to me. The engineer did, however, and laughed. We eventually reached Desbrosses Street, after half-past eight. As I found no car at the ferry-house, I ran all the way to Broadway, got into a stage, and finally reached the theater, at Thirteenth Street. Charles Fisher and I dressed together, and we had a dresser known as "old Edward." Fisher was not acting, and Edward had neglected to report my absence from the theater, so that my cue to go on had been given and I was not there. I was in my dressing-room, bathed in perspiration and all excitement, when Mr. Wallack came in and began to blow up poor old Edward for not

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

reporting my absence from the theater. I interceded for him, saying that I alone was to blame. Mr. Wallack interrupted me by saying : "I won't say anything to you, Stoddart ; I see the state you are in ; but, d—n it, you should n't live in the country." I dressed and played the remainder of the part, and the incident closed.

Lester Wallack, like his father, conducted his theater on the most liberal principles. After his father retired from the active management of the theater, he assumed control, and acted only occasionally. In the event of a new piece being a comparative failure, Lester would come to the rescue in some of his old parts, and always succeeded in saving the day. His own play of "Rosedale" was always a drawing card. Once when this piece was on for a run, the gentleman cast for *Colonel May* was suddenly taken ill. Mr. Charles Rockwell, a minor member of the company, went on in the part at very short notice, and played it so creditably that Lester said to him next day : "Rockwell,



Lester Wallack.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

you must be putting by a liberal sum each week out of your salary, it is such an enormous one. I have taken the liberty of buying you a pocket-book so that you may not lose any of it." Upon opening the wallet Rockwell found it contained a fifty-dollar bill, with Wallack's thanks for his performance of *Colonel May*. For a whole season James W. Wallack and E. L. Davenport were stock members, dividing the business, giving and taking, and all in the most agreeable way. Charles Mathews also played an entire season, and without more prominence being given to him than to the most minor member.

I recall a cast of "London Assurance" that was remarkably strong in the men. Mr. Gilbert played *Sir Harcourt Courtly*, John Brougham *Max Harkaway*, Mr. Wallack *Charles Courtly*, Mathews *Dazzle*, Joe Polk *Dolly Spanker*, and I *Mark Meddle*. The comedy had a good run, two weeks. Some of my most pleasant remembrances are of the seven years I passed as an actor in the Thirteenth Street house. Many changes in the company took place during that

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

time, but it was always kept up to its high standard. Lester Wallack's courteous treatment of all the members of his company; the repertory of pieces; the comfort of the theater; the efficiency of the attendants,—all tended to make life in Wallack's a particularly pleasant one.

A lady of my acquaintance was talking to me, not long ago, about the old days at Wallack's, and of the plays produced there. She mentioned particularly Robertson's plays, saying she should never forget the performance of "School"—the beauty of the stage setting, not so often seen then, with its rural landscape, and fountain of real water, the young school-girls, etc. Then she went on to name the players in the cast, calling them all "dear." There was "dear Mr. Gilbert," "dear Mr. Fisher," "dear Owen Marlowe," "dear Mrs. Vernon," "dear Mrs. Jennings," and "dear Effie Germon"; and there was Mr. Stoddart as the hateful old teacher *Krux*, who, she said, was not dear at all. Ah, the old days and my old companions! I was glad to hear they were not forgotten by my

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

friend. And the name of Tom Robertson brought back to me our first meeting in Yorkshire, years and years ago, when I listened to the reading of his plays, which I could not then quite understand, and when he was, like myself, a struggling player.

I had acted, at the end of our regular season, two summer engagements lasting a few weeks in "The Long Strike," which seemed to turn out well. On one occasion Mr. Charles Vandenhoff and some other ladies and gentlemen had some financial trouble at another theater. Mr. Moss, Wallack's treasurer and representative, had made an arrangement with them to play in "The Long Strike." There was nothing said until the time came to begin the performance, and then there was an actual strike—the actors refusing to go on until the money due to them from their former manager had been paid. Mr. Moss tried to convince them that he had nothing to do with their previous engagement, but they were obdurate and would not yield. Mark the result. Mr. Moss

gave at once a check for the amount claimed, payment of which he stopped next morning. Mr. Floyd, the stage-manager, rehearsed a new lot of people, hurriedly gathered, and "The Long Strike" was played with a new cast the following night, and in a creditable manner. It was a most unjust proceeding on the part of Vandenhoff and his associates, and I presume they lost, as they deserved to lose, a night's salary for their pains.

Our two summer experiences at Wallack's with "The Long Strike" gave two of my associates, B. T. Ringgold and Charles Rockwell, the idea of trying it, during our vacation, in other places. I was not connected with the speculation, but went with them under a salary. They played six weeks successfully in Syracuse, Buffalo, Rochester, and other cities in New York State, and repeated the venture the following summer, with the same satisfactory result.

On the strength of these two engagements I was persuaded to leave Wallack's and go "starring" under the management

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

of Ringgold and Rockwell. I soon regretted this step. I had been for so many years a stock actor that I had no ambition beyond it. I had always thought that a star ought to be one gifted with ability far beyond his fellows, and such a person I did not then consider myself to be. In Mr. Wallack's stock company I had been associated with such actors as Davenport, J. W. Wallack, Charles Mathews, John Gilbert, Miss Rose Eytinge, Madeline Henriques, Louisa Moore, Charles Wyndham, J. C. Williamson, George Clark, Fanny Morant, Mrs. Thomas Barry, Mme. Ponisi, George Holland, Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. John Sefton,—formerly known at Mitchell's Olympic Theater as Mrs. Watts,—Katharine Rogers, and with other talented people under his father's management at the Broome Street theater. With the exception of Davenport, Wallack, and Mathews, who, upon occasion, had previously appeared as stars, all of the above, artists of rare ability, were of the class termed "stock actors," and *all* were assembled in this company on an equal

footing, no one being featured above his fellows. After such an experience and so long an association with such players as these, no wonder I hesitated to claim anything like a stellar position for myself. Nobody can help making occasional mistakes, so I bade farewell to Wallack's, where I had served so long with father and son, to old associates, and to a portion of my New York career that I shall always remember with pleasure.

The management engaged a good company, including Miss Ione Burke, a charming actress, and Miss Julia Gaylord, who, besides being a competent artiste, was a vocalist of rare ability. She afterward became a member of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, and with it sang all the principal prima-donna rôles throughout England. Our pieces were "The Long Strike," "Dearer than Life," and "Meg's Diversion." I signed a contract for three years, and we began our tour in the fall of 1873. The luck which had been ours in our previous ventures did not follow us in this. I was more sorry for my managers than

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

for myself, for I was their attraction, but, unluckily, did not attract. Our non-success may in part, I think, be attributed to the fact that, outside of the cities of New York State which I had previously visited, I was little known at this time ; and then, too, the whole country was laboring under the stress of the terrible financial panic which swept it during the year 1873. It seemed too bad, for the entertainment was a worthy one. Sometimes we were much encouraged by the favor of our audiences, and we were often told that *when we came back* the theater would be crowded ; but on our return to these same places the theaters were by no means full. I used to hear the forerunners, or agents, of the different "shows," as they were called, bragging about the enormous business done by the companies which they represented. I had seen some of these companies, and I wondered why they should be doing so well and we so badly. I have since discovered that theatrical agents are not always noted for veracity.

Messrs. Ringgold and Rockwell kept the

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

company going until the end of the season, in spite of poor business, meeting all their obligations. At the end of it I parted with my managers, canceling our contract by mutual consent. I left them with regret; they were honorable fellows, and had to relinquish their enterprise only for lack of capital.

My position at Wallack's was filled by Mr. Harry Beckett, who was engaged for the purpose. My brother George at this time had returned from England, and he and I formed the idea of going "on the road" on our own account. I bought from Mr. Boucicault the rights to "The Long Strike," and my brother and I made a second venture. The result was not much better. I was wavering as to my future when I met Mr. Lawrence Barrett, and I was encouraged by what he said. "I have followed you in the different towns," he remarked, "and you are highly spoken of everywhere. Stick to it. I had a similar experience. The people must know you and expect your coming. You please those who do see you; so stick to it." I



Mrs. Vernon.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

was almost determined to do so, but when I returned to New York I happened to go to the Union Square Theater to see "Led Astray." During the interval between the acts I met Mr. A. M. Palmer in the lobby, and he asked me if I had as yet had enough of starring. I told him that I had not found it profitable. "You had better come to me," he said. The result was that, after some discussion regarding terms, I was engaged as a member of the Union Square Theater Company, and the association thus begun lasted for nearly twenty years. It was thus that I dismissed the notion of being a star.

In this matter of starring I often think how conditions have changed since the old days. It is not now so much the ability or the reputation of the aspirant for stellar honors which so much avails as it is the attractiveness of the play in which he appears; not so much the individual as the material in which he appears—now as never before "the play 's the thing." I suppose if I had been provided with a new and attractive vehicle for my venture the result

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

might have been different. However, what I lost in dollars I have certainly made up in comfort: I have been enabled to remain almost constantly in New York, the haven for which we all strive; I have had the longest metropolitan career of any actor now upon the stage; I have had the pleasure of being associated with the best companies; I have also served the best managers, from the elder Wallack to the present time; and, above all, I have been enabled to pass a long life at home, in domestic happiness. So, when I look backward to the beginning of my career in New York, I feel that I have much cause for gratitude as that career draws near its close.

I had been thrust into eccentric comedy with Wallack, and upon my advent in the Union Square Theater Company I was obliged again to change my line of business, for Mr. Stuart Robson was the comedian of the company, and therefore I was put on for character work. In the old days you had to try and make yourself like the part allotted to you, whether you

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

were really suitable or not, so that my early training helped me at this time.

“Rose Michel” was the play in which I opened at the Union Square. In this I appeared as *Pierre Michel*, a person of the class known as “heavy villains.” I told Mr. Palmer I thought the part somewhat out of my line, but he thought otherwise, and circumstances eventually proved that he was right, for I got much credit for my performance. I have an impression that I was largely indebted to the coat I wore for any success which I achieved. I had been told to order my dress, making my own selection. I described to the costumer what I wanted, directing him to make a long gray coat which should reach down to my heels, explaining that my part was that of an old miser, and that I wanted my dress, as far as possible, to convey the character of the man. So I said: “Make it loose and heavy, so that I can slip out of it in a second.” He professed to know exactly what I wanted, and set to work to make the garment. When I received it I was disgusted. It was a clean modern

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

overcoat with a bright muslin lining. However, I determined to make it what I wanted, so I took it out to my farm and spoiled its beauty with Jersey mud. Mrs. Stoddart then tackled it, lined it with some heavy old material, jagged it with her shears, and then threw it into the cellar and made a mat of it until it was required. There is no difficulty in obtaining a handsome coat, but it is difficult to get one that shall have the appearance of great wear and look old, moldy, and weather-beaten, such as was necessary for the miser *Pierre Michel*. When we got through with that coat it was all I could desire, and afterward it was much extolled when I used it in the play.

I sent my costume ahead from the country to the theater the day before our opening. We had no rehearsal, so I did not go in until evening. On reaching the theater, what was my consternation to learn that my clothes had not arrived ! I was almost distracted. The overture was about to be rung in, and I had nothing to wear. I went to Mr. Palmer and explained

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

my plight. He said: "Keep cool; don't excite yourself. You don't go on until the second act. Hunt it up. If nothing else can be done, some one must lend you a wig and you must get what you can out of the wardrobe." The things had been sent by Adams's Express, and away I rushed to the company's office, some distance from the theater. There I was told that the packet had been delivered. I flew back to the theater, almost maddened. It was my first appearance in New York since I had left Wallack's, a new part and a new manager; I had played only comedy parts, and was now to appear in an entirely different character, so I was naturally nervous; and I had no costume. At the theater my dress was nowhere to be found. I tried the Morton House without success. I do not know what possessed me to look for it at the Union Square Hotel, but I did look for it there, and there I found it. The packet had been delivered at the wrong address by the express company, a mistake occasioned by similarity of names. The porter at the hotel volun-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

teered to send it to the theater for me; but, once having recovered it, I would not give it up, so I seized it, hurried to the theater, and luckily was able to get myself dressed in time. Mr. Palmer was glad to see me, and the company congratulated me on the recovery of my "props."

The play made a great hit, and my part went well, my reception being generous. And oh, that beautiful coat! It proved all that I could have wished. Before committing the murder, I threw it from my shoulders, and it slipped down to the ground and lay at my feet like a bundle of old rags. Mr. Nat Goodwin, who afterward gave imitations, gave an excellent one of the way I used to throw this coat from my shoulders during my performance.

The Union Square Theater had been running successfully for several seasons previous to my advent there. "Agnes," "The Two Orphans," and "Led Astray" had been produced. Although I was a new member, I met, in the company, some old associates—Miss Rose Eytinge, who had

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

been the leading lady at Wallack's during part of my career there, and Stuart Robson, with whom I had acted at Laura Keene's. Charles R. Thorne, Jr., another member, and I had played small parts together in "The Invisible Prince," with Mrs. John Wood. So I felt comparatively at home. "Rose Michel" was beautifully staged and splendidly acted. To me it read like an ordinary melodrama, but it was set with such care and acted in such a refined manner that it was raised to a high grade of performance. The scenic effects produced on that small stage were indeed extraordinary. Mr. Marston, who was with Mr. Palmer so many years, was, and is, a wonderful scene-painter.

The rights of the play "Rose Michel" for America had been bought by Mr. Palmer, but in its original form it did not please him, and persons were employed to make alterations in it so as to render it suitable for production at the Union Square. The work proved unsatisfactory, however, until Mr. Steele Mackaye essayed the task of revision and his version was

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

accepted and played. The cast included Rose Eytinge, Charles R. Thorne, Jr., Stuart Robson, John Parselle, Frederick Robinson, Eben Plympton, Fanny Morant, Nina Varian, and others, and the opening was November 23, 1875. The play ran almost throughout the season.

Mr. John Parselle was the stage-manager of the theater. I had never met him before, but I knew that he had been for many years in London, at the Haymarket, the Lyceum, and the Adelphi. He came to America with Mr. Charles Wyndham, and he acted for a season with Mrs. John Drew, at the Arch Street Theater, Philadelphia, previous to joining Mr. Palmer's forces. I also knew that he hailed from Glasgow. I had, therefore, no hesitation in speedily making myself known to him. We became fast friends and companions, and remained so until his death. He was a rare scholar, a linguist of great ability, an authority on all matters of disputed pronunciation. He had been a teacher of languages in Glasgow, but, like Alexander and my father, became stage-struck and



Charles R. Thorne, Jr., as *Count De Vernay* in "Rose Michel."



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

entered the profession. He had married a Scotch lassie and had a large family, all of his children having been born in London. "Jeannie," as he used to call his wife, was the most simple and lovable woman that could be imagined. She did not join her husband for two years after his coming to America, and Parselle would often tell me that although he had been so many years in London, his wife knew little or nothing about theaters, always remaining at home looking after the "bairns." She had a lovely Scotch accent that I delighted to hear. When her husband was acting, and I happened to be out of the performance, he would sometimes ask me to escort "Jeannie" to the theater, and I frequently did so. She had seen so little of acting that it was most amusing to hear her comments upon the play. "Mr. Stoddart," she would say, "I never like the fellow that plays the villain. I ken him the moment he comes oot on the stage, and I hate him a' through the performance. There is one guid thing, however: the fellow always gets his de-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

serts at the end." All her children were left in London when she and her husband came to America, having grown up and settled there. She used to give me a full description of them, but the youngest, "Chairley," she would say, was her favorite. Mr. and Mrs. Parselle spent a short time each summer with us at our country place, which was a pleasure to us, for Parselle was a splendid companion, filled to the brim with Scotch anecdote and reminiscence.

Mr. Palmer, during his career as manager of the Union Square Theater, was accustomed to send his company, almost annually, to Chicago and Boston at the conclusion of the metropolitan season, and many times he extended the tour as far as the Pacific coast. I visited California twelve times under his management, and in all that time Parselle and myself were inseparable companions, living at the same hotel and taking daily strolls together. He and his wife made a complete confidant of me, telling me all their plans—how they had, in their frugal Scotch way,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

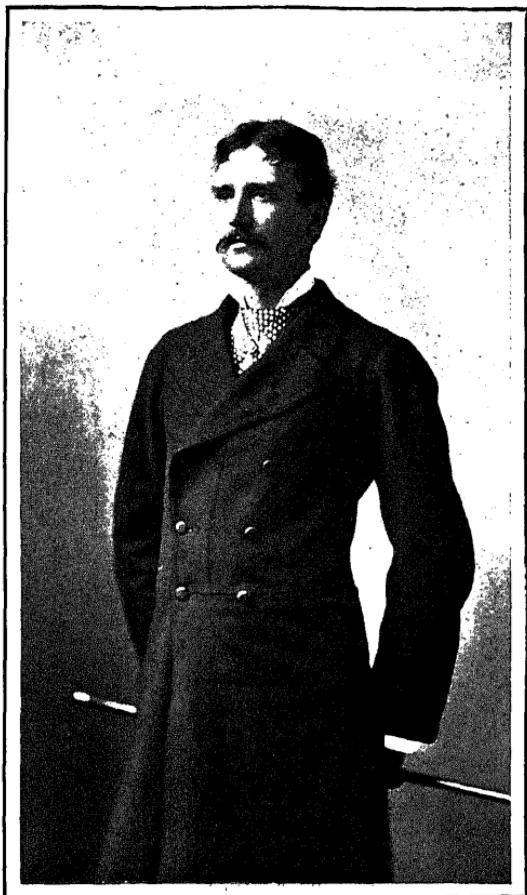
saved a modest competence at the price of much privation and discomfort, and how they looked forward to the day when Parselle should retire from the stage,—which he intended to do when he reached the age of sixty,—and that they would then pass the rest of their lives in peace on the fruits of their labor. Alas! their hopes were never to be realized, for shortly after they had paid their last visit to us in the country I received a telegram from Parselle saying: "Jeannie is dead." Not long afterward Parselle himself was taken seriously ill on Sixth Avenue, was hurriedly placed in a carriage, and died before reaching his home. Sheridan Shook, James W. Collier, and I followed his remains to Greenwood, where he was buried beside his companion, his "Jeannie."

My long career with Mr. Palmer brought me many pleasant friendships. Our frequent trips to the Pacific coast threw us all so much together that our association necessarily became intimate, lasting as they did for a week at a time on board the cars, and we grew thus to know one another

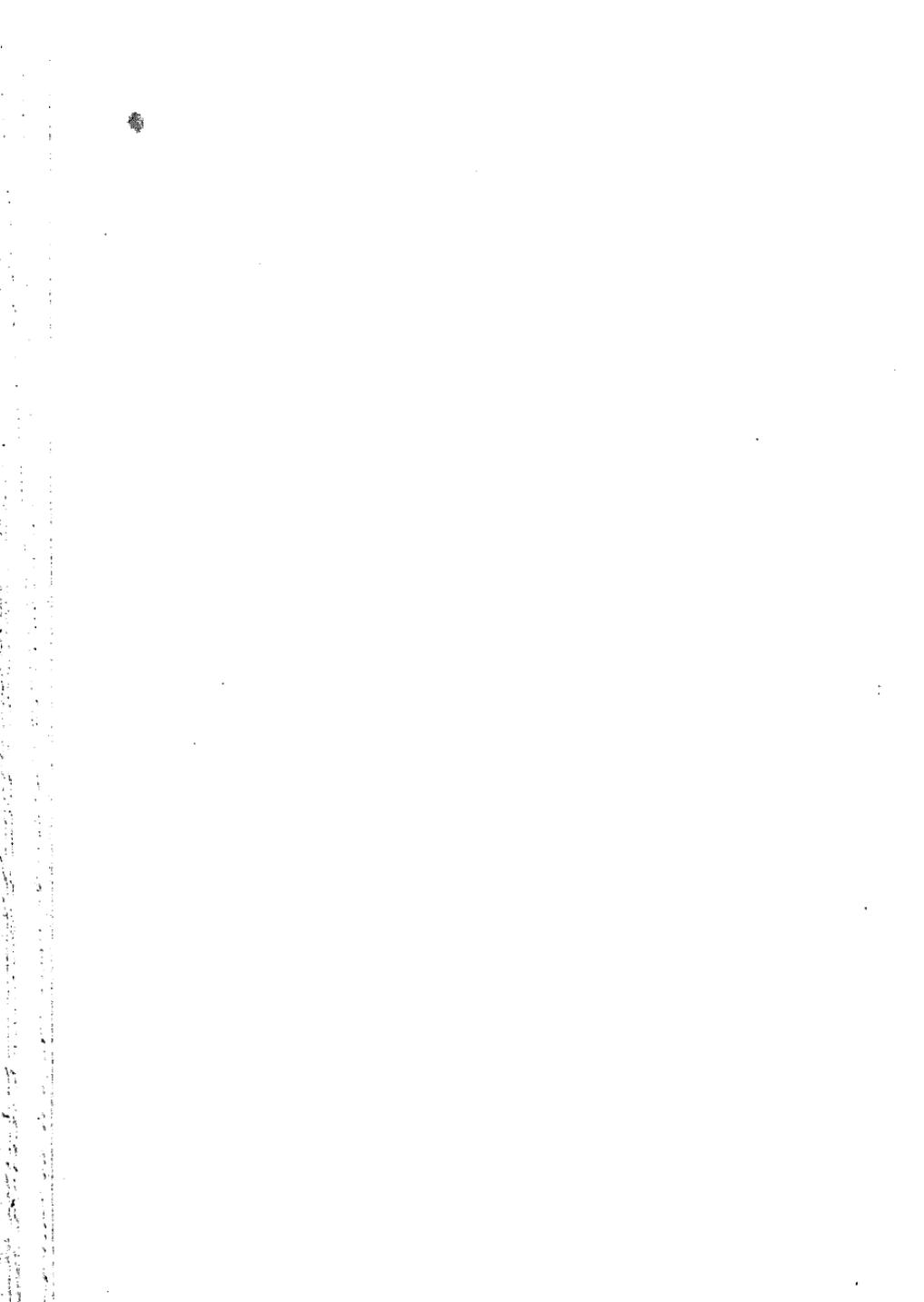
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

more thoroughly than we ordinarily should have done in an acquaintance of several seasons in a theater. We always had our own private car, and the humblest person employed was treated, as far as the comforts of travel were concerned, in the same manner as were the principals. The journey across the continent thus became a thing to be desired rather than an experience to be avoided. During the journey we would pass the time in telling stories, in singing songs, playing cards, etc., and on one occasion when we made the trip with the company that was to present "Alabama," we had with us a colored quartet that was engaged to sing during the performance, and these vocalists much enlivened the hours by their negro melodies, delighting not only our own members, but others, who were eager listeners along the route.

My first trip to California had been made in 1878. While I was in Chicago with the Union Square Company I received an offer from the Baldwin Theater, at San Francisco, to go there and play two



Henry James Montague.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

weeks in "The Long Strike." At that time they had a very strong stock company, headed by James O'Neill. James A. Herne and F. F. Mackay were also members. Mr. H. J. Montague had been acting in "Diplomacy" at the California Theater, and had made a great hit, playing to enormous business. He was compelled to retire from the cast for a time, having taken cold, as he supposed; but his illness proved to be a serious malady. As, during his absence, the receipts of the theater had greatly diminished, he determined, against the advice of his physician, to play again. Many think his reappearance was the cause of his death; whether or no that was the case, certain it is that he died suddenly soon after. His death was a great shock to the members of his company, and one of them, Mr. J. W. Shannon, told me that although it had been arranged to leave Montague in San Francisco when the company returned East, a short time before his death he had said in the most cheerful way: "Boys, I am not to be left; the doctor says I can go

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

home with you." Poor fellow, he never did. We were playing "Dearer than Life" at the Baldwin Theater, and just as the performance was closing, some one came and told us that Montague was no more. I dressed as quickly as I could and hurried to the Palace Hotel, where he had been living. There I was shown into his room. A sad sight indeed! All the members of his company were in deep grief, surrounding the body, which was stretched upon a long table, with photographs of his mother and sister placed at either side of his head.

Montague was one of the most charming men I ever knew. I had met him some years before in New York. Mr. Boucicault had contemplated a reproduction of "The Flying Scud," and wanted me to play in it. I went to see him at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and Montague was with him. This was before he had played in America. I was introduced to him, and although few words were exchanged between us, I was immediately impressed by his frank and courteous bearing. I had never before

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

met one possessing so delightful a personality. When I saw him stretched out in his lonely room at the hotel in San Francisco, away from all his relatives, I could not help thinking of that other day when I had first seen him in New York, a bright and handsome youth.

My two weeks' engagement concluded, I returned East to begin my season at the Union Square. I had thought that my first visit to California would be my last; but I have since visited there so often that I think I have become as well known there, probably, as in New York.

“Ferreol” was produced after the run of “Rose Michel,” March 21, 1876, and was cast to the full strength of the company, including Thorne, Robson, Parselle, Robinson, and Miss Kate Claxton. It was in this play that Miss Maude Harrison made her first appearance at the Union Square Theater. I was cast for the part of *Martial*, a gamekeeper, another murderer. The play—I thought a fine one—did not run the remainder of the season, but was followed, May 9, by “Conscience,” which

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

held the stage until June 9. In this appeared Thorne, Charles A. Stevenson, Par-selle, Stoddart, Miss Claxton, and Mrs. Wilkins. In "Miss Multon" I had the pleasure of playing a part which had some very good scenes with Mrs. Wilkins. I remembered her as the leading lady for two or three seasons with Alexander in Glasgow. She was then a Mrs. John Dale, very handsome and clever. Mr. Dale was the leading man. After his death she married Serveant Wilkins, a famous lawyer in London. One of her favorite parts was the *Widow Green* in Knowles's play of "The Lone Chase." I have often heard her tell of her performance of that part many years ago in London. "Queen Victoria," she would say, "and Prince Albert were in their box one evening when I was playing the *Widow Green*, and the Queen said to the Prince, 'Now, Albert, pay attention, for here comes *our Widow Green!*'" Mrs. Wilkins was very fond of repeating this experience, and having heard it so frequently, her associates rather dreaded its repetition.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

“Miss Multon” was produced November 28, 1876, with Clara Morris in the principal part. Sara Jewett, Mrs. Wilkins, Miss Bijou Herron, James O’Neill, John Parselle, Stoddart, and others were in the cast. The indisposition of Miss Morris caused her to withdraw for a portion of the run, Charlotte Thompson and Katharine Rogers each taking her place during her absence. The play was a great success. At this time Charles Thorne, Claude Burroughs, Harry Murdock, and Miss Claxton, together with other members of the company, not being in the cast, were sent to Brooklyn to give some performances of “The Two Orphans.” After the performance of “Miss Multon,” December 5, 1876, as I was on my way home, I noticed, while crossing the ferry between New York and Jersey City, a great conflagration lighting up the sky. Living as I did in the country, the news did not reach me until late the next day that the Brooklyn Theater had been destroyed by fire, with a dreadful loss of life. Mr. Palmer had a numerous company, and frequently sent those

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

members not employed to Brooklyn. A short time before the fire, I, with other members, had played there in "The Long Strike." "The Two Orphans" was produced before I joined the company, so that I was not in the cast, and thus escaped being in the theater at the time of the fire. I knew Murdock slightly and Burroughs intimately—an honest young fellow. They both lost their lives through their endeavor to return to their dressing-rooms to save some of their property. There was much grief among the members of the company at the untimely end of these two members.

My contracts with Mr. Palmer at first were for a period of three years each. I think this arrangement was renewed three or four times, until Mr. Palmer said that he thought formal contracts between us were unnecessary, and so they were discontinued. I needed no written documents from him to the effect that he would do as he said; his word was enough for me. I always tried, during my long service, to be as honest and straightforward with him.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

“The Danicheffs” was produced in 1877—a beautiful play. It had a long run in New York, and was acted for a considerable time in Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago with the original cast, which comprised Thorne, O’Neill, Parselle, Stoddart, Miss Jewett, Fanny Morant, Mrs. Wilkins, and others.

I had not met Thorne since we were together in minor positions with Mrs. John Wood, at which time we dressed together. He was a young chap then, without position, but was handsome and so full of fun that it led him to constant “guying.” I scarcely ever knew when to take him seriously—a fact that seemed to amuse him much. He stayed a short time with Mrs. Wood, going, I believe, to Boston, and I did not meet him again until we were members of the Union Square. At this time his acting had become striking. His manner was subdued and he had an intensity which surprised me. I do not think I ever saw any one so fine in certain parts. He could, in strong situations, be effective and forcible without resort to

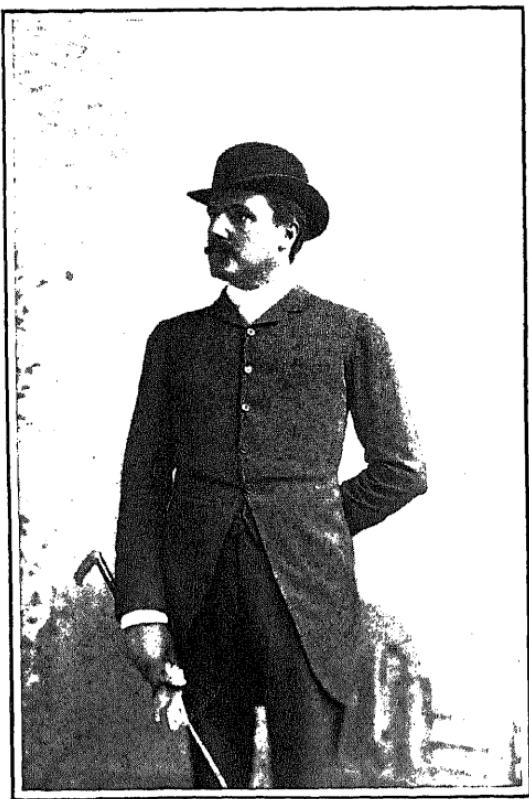
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

shouting or ranting. His performances in "The Danicheffs" and in "The Banker's Daughter" were fine examples of his ripe ability. The stage suffered a serious loss indeed in his death.

After the run of "The Danicheffs," Thorne and other members of the company were sent to San Francisco, playing the Union Square successes, and Charles Coghlan came to us at the home theater. Before his appearance we produced a version of "Nicholas Nickleby" entitled "Smike," Bijou Herron playing *Smike*, Le Moyne Squeers, Boniface John Brody, and I Newman Noggs. The play ran from May 7, 1877, till June 9, and was successful.

On December 26, 1877, "The Man of Success" was produced. The cast included Charles Coghlan, Parselle, Agnes Booth, Stoddart, and others; a fine play, but not successful. Mr. Coghlan's performance I thought most artistic.

On January 23, 1878, "A Celebrated Case" was brought out. This was a notable production and had a long and prosperous run. It enlisted the services of



Charles Coghlan.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Charles Coghlan, Frank Hardenbergh, Parselle, Agnes Booth, Linda Dietz, Sara Jewett, and Mrs. G. H. Gilbert. I played *Sergeant O'Rourke*. I have reason to remember this character. In the prologue I had a scene with Mrs. Booth, who played the wife of *Jean Renaud*, the hero, in the course of which she was supposed to give to me, as the *Sergeant*, a cup of wine, which I had to swallow. It so happened that the property-man had been using kerosene on the stage during the day, and had left the bottle containing that liquid upon the dresser where Mrs. Booth had been in the habit of finding the drink for the *Sergeant*. During the business she poured a full cup from this bottle, handed it to me, and I swallowed the contents at a gulp. "Oh, Lord!" I said as I received the potion. "What have I done?" said Mrs. Booth, under her breath. I could only gasp out, "Kerosene!" and make a hasty exit. For almost a week every one avoided me, owing to the presence of the noxious fluid. I drank such a quantity that the odor and taste remained with me until I

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

thought I should never be rid of it. Otherwise it did me no injury, and my physician even said that it did me good.

There is quite an important juvenile part in this play, and Mr. Palmer had much difficulty in finding a child young enough, and yet sufficiently intelligent, to play it. The child has to give important evidence concerning the innocence or guilt of her father, who is accused of crime. For some days we had all sorts of mothers bringing all sorts of children, who after going through the ordeal of a rehearsal were promptly dismissed. At last a lady appeared leading a wee tot, by name Eva French, who instantly astonished everybody. She laid aside her wrap and hat, and pitched in with such confidence, displaying such ability, that it immediately settled the question. Mr. Palmer was delighted. She was regularly engaged, and she was seen afterward in many parts, such as the child in "The Banker's Daughter" and the little waif in "The Lights o' London." She also went out with the company to California, and remained with Mr.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Palmer until she became too old to play children's rôles. In all our travels she proved the little sunbeam of the company. I think that I was an especial favorite with her, for during our trips she would sit upon my knee for hours, and I would make up little Scotch stories to amuse her, and as I would finish one she would always promptly demand another.

Years afterward I was playing for a charitable benefit in "One Touch of Nature" at the Academy of Music, and after the performance the doorkeeper told me that there were two ladies outside inquiring for me. As I went to meet them the elder one said: "Mr. Stoddart, I suppose you don't remember us. I am Mrs. French, and this is Eva, the little girl who used to sit on your knee and listen to your stories." I was surprised that this handsome and modish young woman should be the little child who had once been a member of our company, the "little Eva" of bygone days.

"The Banker's Daughter" was produced at the Union Square November 30, 1878,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and was an instantaneous success. It made more money for the management, I should judge, than any other play in the annals of the house, and yet its history is a strange one. When Charles Coghlan was in the theater Mr. Palmer thought of doing it, so it was read to us in the green-room, then being called "Lillian's Last Love." I remember Coghlan saying he thought it the greatest trash he had ever heard. Mr. Palmer, I presume, had no great opinion of it, either, as, after the reading, nothing more was heard of it for a long time. In due course, however, it turned up again, under the title of "The Banker's Daughter." Mr. Palmer set A. R. Cazauran to work upon it with a view to its improvement. Mr. Cazauran's position in the theater was that of a reconstructor, and his business to alter and endeavor to improve plays, and he did some effective alteration on this piece, so it was fortunate that it was not produced in its original form. I was always a great admirer of Charles Coghlan's artistic ability, but I doubt if any one could have

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

equaled Thorne's performance of *John Strelbow* in this play. Miss Sara Jewett was charming as *Lillian*. In those days Miss Jewett was most delightful in all that she undertook. Often, in going home after the performance on the Pennsylvania Railroad, I have heard the young men who had been to the theater loud in their praises of Miss Jewett. How sweet, how ladylike, she was ! Miss Maude Harrison also made a great hit as *Mrs. Brown*, as likewise did Joe Polk in *Phipps*. Le Moyne, Lingham, the late Walden Ramsey, and myself were in the original cast.

“Lost Children” was next produced, April 17, 1879, and it ran until May 17. It was magnificently staged, but it turned out a comparative failure.

The season of 1879 was opened with a production of “French Flats,” a farce, and different from any of the pieces heretofore done at the Union Square ; we were therefore curious to see how it would be received. The theater was closed for a dress rehearsal on the Monday of the week set for its production. Mr. Palmer, with a

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

few others, were in front, and not only our manager but all his company were depressed at the effect of this rehearsal. In fact, the night was funereal. We produced this play Tuesday, October 21, and, contrary to our expectations, it was received with much favor, so that it ran for over one hundred nights, and went with roars of laughter. I had one scene to enact which afterward was known as my "broken-up scene." I was supposed to have had an encounter with a jealous opera-singer,—played by Joe Polk,—and had to come on in a most disheveled condition. The situation caused the longest continuous laughter I ever heard.

"The False Friend" was put on January 21, 1880, and held the stage until March 20. It was a fine play. Mr. Thorne, who played the "false friend," gave an excellent performance; but his attractiveness in the part rather upset the motive of the play, for the virtuous young man of the piece, although supposed to be entitled to it, got little sympathy from the audience, so natural and effective was Thorne's act.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ing. Most of the principal members were cast in the play—Harry Courtaine, Par-  
selle, Mrs. Phillips, Sara Jewett, Maude  
Harrison, Stoddart, and others.

“Daniel Rochat” was produced October 15, 1880, and ran until December 14. Thorne in the title rôle and Miss Jewett as *Leah* each contributed a notable performance. The other parts afforded fine opportunities, and were well played by the principal members of the company. This play, which is religious in its character, concerns itself with the struggle between the disciple of agnosticism, *Daniel Rochat*, and the Christian as depicted by *Leah*, and it caused considerable discussion among clergymen as well as laity. We performed it in San Francisco, and when there the rector of Grace Church and the members of his vestry came to see it. I forget the clergyman’s name, but we all received invitations to attend his church on the Sunday following his visit to the theater. These invitations were addressed, not to us by name, but to the characters we represented, mine, I remember, reading “To

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

*Dr. Bidache,*" which was my name in the play.

I availed myself of it, as he said in his note that it was his intention to make a few remarks by way of comment on the play. After hearing him I was glad that I had attended. He spoke of the great literary merit of the play, and how ably the argument between the Christian and the free-thinker was handled by the author. He also drew our attention to what each had done for the benefit of the world. The agnostic's religion claimed, he said, to benefit his fellow-man. He then went on to point out that all institutions of a charitable nature everywhere are undoubtedly the work of the church, and owe their life and origin to Christianity, which is truly the case. He concluded by saying that he was almost as much interested, when at the theater, in the demeanor of the spectators as in the performance itself, and was much gratified to notice that all the approbation and all the sympathy of the people were gained by the Christian girl. His remarks laid

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

such hold on me that on every future occasion, when I visited San Francisco, I regularly took my place in Grace Church.

“Daniel Rochat” was followed by a revival of “The Banker’s Daughter” on December 15 of that year ; it was played for about a month, “The Creole” being produced January 16, 1881, and continuing until February 7. A revival of “The Danicheffs” followed on February 8, lasting until February 26. “Felicia ; or, A Woman’s Love,” with Miss Rose Eytine in the principal part, was brought out on February 28, and played until April 22, ending that season.

The next season opened with “The Lights o’ London,” December 5, 1881. This was a wonderful scenic production, considering the limited stage room of the theater. Mr. Cathcart, Wilson Barrett’s stage-manager, who had been the producer of the play in London, came to America and directed the rehearsals at the Union Square. The piece was a great success, running throughout the entire season, to large business. Its New York success was

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

duplicated in Chicago, San Francisco, and all the important cities of the country. The production enlisted the entire strength of the company—Thorne, Frederic De Belleville, Parselle, H. J. Montgomery, Ramsey, Sara Jewett, Maude Harrison, Eleanor Carey, Mrs. Wilkins, little Eva French, and many lesser lights, together with crowds of supers. I shall not soon forget the part I played. I was cast for another villain, *Seth Preene* by name, and in one scene it was my ill fortune to be thrown, by the “gentleman villain” of the play, from London Bridge into the Thames beneath. To say the least, it was anything but a pleasant sensation, this being hurled backward from the rail of the bridge, a distance of possibly fifteen or twenty feet from the level of the stage. The supposed water consisted of gauze set pieces running across the stage, between the lines of which was an open trap with a feather-bed at the bottom of it to receive me as I fell. I considered myself very fortunate if in my backward fall from the bridge to this bed I met with no obstruction. In order

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

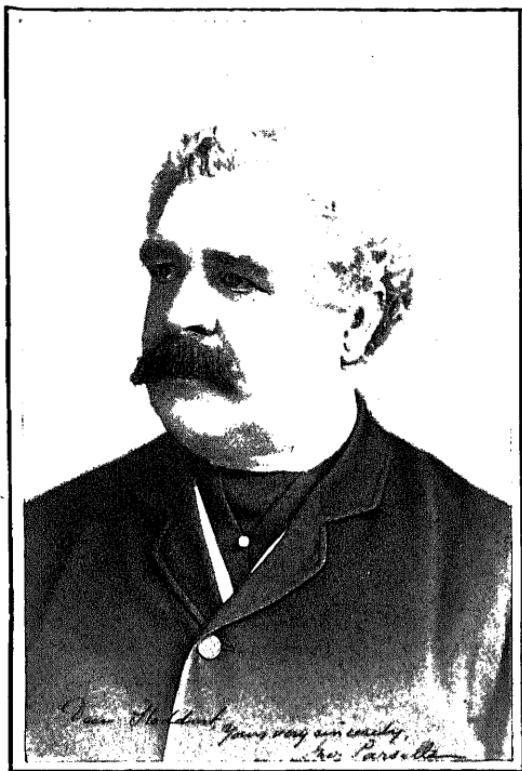
to guide myself I was in the habit of fastening a string to the rail of the bridge at a point exactly over the open trap, and in my struggle with the villain I used to contrive so that I should fall from this position. I remember little Eva French would usually come to me before the scene and report that she had seen the string in its proper position. Although the part was a fine one, and I enjoyed it, still, what with the bruises which I sustained in my fall, and the additional discomfort of occasionally having my eyes and mouth full of salt (which they threw from beneath the stage as I fell, to indicate the spray of the water), I was not altogether sorry when I dropped the acquaintance of *Seth Preene*.

We opened in Chicago after our New York season, playing a long and very successful engagement, and presenting only the one play, "The Lights o' London." After Chicago the company started to San Francisco, where the piece was also highly successful. We returned to open the season of 1882 at the Union Square

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

with "The Rantzaus." Mr. Palmer had seen the play in Paris, and was so pleased with it that he secured the rights for America. He also had all the dresses made abroad in exact duplication of the original ones. "The Rantzaus" is a beautiful pastoral play : it vividly portrays the hatred of two brothers and the love of their two children for each other ; the final reconciliation between the brothers is effectively brought about. The brothers were played in Paris by Coquelin and Got. John Parselle and I were the originals in New York. The production was a decided artistic success ; financially, many of Mr. Palmer's productions proved more desirable.

"The Parisian Romance" was produced on January 12, 1883. *Baron Chevrial*, a strong and peculiar part, has since become well known as one of Mr. Richard Mansfield's strong impersonations. The peculiar attributes of the part caused Mr. Palmer some doubt, for a time, as to a correct and judicious cast for it. Mr. Mansfield had been engaged, but as he was



John Parselle.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

comparatively untried in legitimate work, his position in the theater was thought to be a minor one. After the reading of the play the company were unanimous in their opinion that "The Parisian Romance" was a *one-part piece*, and that part the *Baron*, and all the principals had their eye on him. After some delay and much expectancy the rôle was given to me. I was playing a strong part in "The Rantzaus," and my friends in the company congratulated me upon the opportunity thus presented of following it up with so powerful a successor. Miss Minnie Conway, who was a member of the company and had seen the play in Paris, said that she thought the *Baron* a strange part to give to me. "It's a *Lester Wallack* kind of part," she said.

This information rather disconcerted me, but I rehearsed the part for about a week, and then, being convinced that it did not suit me, I went to Mr. Palmer and told him I felt very doubtful as to whether I could do him or myself justice in it. He would not hear of my giving it up, saying

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

that he knew me better than I did myself; that I was always doubtful; but that he was willing to take the risk. He also read a letter which he had received from some one in Paris giving advice regarding the production, in which, among other things, it was said that *Baron Chevrial* was the principal part, that everything depended on him, and that "if you can get Stoddart to look well in full dress, he is the man you must have to play it."

I left Mr. Palmer, resolved to try again, and do my best. Mr. Mansfield was cast in the play for a small part, and, I discovered, was watching me like a cat during rehearsals. A lot of fashion-plates were sent to my dressing-room, with instructions to select my costume. As I had hitherto been, for some time, associated with vagabonds, villains, etc., I think these fashion-plates had a tendency to unnerve me more than anything else. So I again went to Mr. Palmer and told him I could not possibly play the *Baron*. "You must," said Mr. Palmer. "I rather think Mr. Mansfield must have suspected something of

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

the sort, for he has been to me asking, in the event of your not playing it, that I give it to him. I have never seen Mr. Mansfield act; he has not had much experience here, and might ruin the production."

At Mr. Palmer's earnest solicitation, I promised to try it again. I had by this time worked myself into such a state of nervousness that my wife interfered. "All the theaters in the world," said she, "are not worth what you are suffering. Go and tell Mr. Palmer you positively cannot play the part." Fearing the outcome, I did not risk another interview with my manager, but sought out Mr. Cazauran, and returned the part to him, with a message to Mr. Palmer that I positively declined to play it.

The result was that Mr. Mansfield was put in my place. He rehearsed the part next day, and, with only a brief time for study and few rehearsals, made his appearance in it on January 10, 1883. The result is well known. His success was instantaneous and emphatic—so much so that from then until now *Baron Chevrial*

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

has remained one of his strongest embodiments. Mr. Palmer was delighted, and *I* consoled myself with the thought that my refusal of the part had proved not only far better for the interests of the production, but was also the immediate cause of giving an early opportunity to one who has since done much for the stage.

During the run of "The Parisian Romance" Mr. Palmer engaged some extra people, and Miss Sara Jewett and I were sent to the old Windsor Theater in the Bowery to give performances of "The Long Strike," after which we played it at the Broadway Theater, also in Newark and other cities. The Union Square season ending, we started again on our annual tour for the summer months, playing in Boston, Chicago, Denver, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco. Mr. Mansfield was now a regular member of the company, and accompanied us.

I had expected upon my first visit to the Pacific coast that I should not find many to whom I was professionally familiar. So I was somewhat surprised on this

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

trip, while walking in Market Street one afternoon, to hear a gentleman remark to his companion, in passing : "Why, there 's old Stoddart." Evidently old New-Yorkers, and familiar with the old days, of whom one finds many throughout the country.

Our next season at the Union Square began with Bartley Campbell's play called "Separation," a good production and a long run. Charles Coghlan reappeared, and the cast also included Parselle, Joseph Whiting, Felix Morris, Eleanor Carey, Maud Harrison, Effie Ellsler, Mrs. Phillips, Stoddart, etc. When "Separation" had run its course Mr. Coghlan left the company, and it was our last professional meeting. I don't know that I ever met an actor that I admired more. During the run of "A Celebrated Case" I had frequent long talks with him. He was kind enough to speak well of my efforts on more than one occasion. I knew he was sincere, so regarded it as a compliment. "Approval from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed." He would tell me of his London career: of his association with George

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Hovey, whom I had met in my young days in Scotland ; of Tom Robertson ; and of the delightful productions at Marie Wilton's Theater. Poor fellow ! A rare actor and a thorough gentleman—what a pity to be cut off so suddenly while still in his vigor ! During this season Mr. Palmer went abroad, and the firm of Shook & Collier, composed of Sheridan Shook and James W. Collier, took possession of the theater. They retained it for nearly two seasons, but were not as successful as they deserved to be. Sheridan Shook had long been associated with the theater. He was a straightforward, good-hearted man, bluff and without polish, but generous to a fault, and many were beholden to him for frequent kindnesses that never became known. It was my privilege to be intimately acquainted with him in those days.

During Shook & Collier's occupancy "Storm-beaten" was produced in finestyle. John H. Barnes—"Handsome Jack," as he was called—was brought from London as leading man. "The Prisoner for Life," the next production, was notable for its

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

scenic effects. I remember poor Sara Jewett was out of her element in these lurid melodramas; but the climax of her discomfort was reached in a farcical affair called "Three Wives to One Husband." There was in this a noisy burlesque scene where many of the characters were, for some purpose, behaving in an outrageous manner, kicking up a row and knocking the furniture about, all leading up to some absurdly comic climax. Poor Miss Jewett was given a brass coal-seuttle and pair of tongs, and at certain cues had to beat upon the seuttle with the tongs as a means of augmenting the uproar. I was at her elbow doing something equally absurd, and can even now see her look of despair as she said in a helpless aside: "Oh, Mr. Stoddart, after what we have seen on this stage! Oh," - bang, bang! - "is n't this dreadful!" Miss Jewett, who was a niece of an eminent New York physician, Dr. Flint, had a charming personality and was beloved by her associates. In her death the stage lost a popular young actress and a lady of culture and refinement.

I remained with Shook & Collier until they gave up the theater in 1884. In the meantime Mr. Palmer had returned to America and assumed the management of the Madison Square Theater in Twenty-fourth Street. He had arranged with Mr. Henry Arthur Jones to bring out his play of "Saints and Sinners." He sent for me and offered me an engagement, which I accepted, as I had ascertained from Mr. Shook that he meant to retire from the theatrical business; so I signed a three years' contract with Mr. Palmer for the Madison Square Theater Company. Mr. Jones had come from London personally to direct the rehearsals of "Saints and Sinners," and read the play to the company. It underwent alteration before its production in New York. I was fortunate, in joining the company again, to meet a number of old associates. Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Phillips, Le Moyne, Robinson, Frank Drew, and Davidge were old friends; but Herbert Kelcey, Louis Masson, Miss Annie Russell, and Marie Burroughs were strangers to me. Miss Burroughs I thought a



Sara Jewett.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

very beautiful woman. I remember after the reading she expressed a desire to play the part of *Lettie Fletcher*, the minister's daughter; but being at that time almost a novice, she was afraid that she would not get it, that Mr. Jones and Mr. Palmer would hesitate to intrust her with it. Other ladies of more experience also had an eye upon the part. All the characters had been allotted for some time before a selection was made as to *Lettie*. At last Mr. Masson, a member of the company and Miss Burroughs's husband, was given the part, one evening, and told that his wife was to play it. Masson tells the story that upon reaching home he found her in bed. "Marie," he said, bursting into the room, "I have good news for you. You play *Lettie Fletcher*. Here is the part." His wife, he said, jumped out of bed and danced a hornpipe on the spot. The selection was certainly a good one. She looked a picture, and, moreover, astonished us by the intensity of her acting. A friend of mine, on witnessing the performance with Kelcey as the attractive villain making

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

love to Miss Burroughs, cried enthusiastically, "Are n't they a handsome pair? I know he is a villain, but I believe I would run away with him myself." The piece was finely cast. Le Moyne gave a splendid performance as *Hoggard*, as did also E. M. Holland as *Lot Burden*, while Davidge, Drew, Flockton, and Mrs. Phillips were each admirable. I felt quite at home in the character of *Jacob Fletcher*, the minister, and was much gratified in receiving from Mr. Jones a complimentary letter saying the production in America surpassed that given in London.

The Madison Square Theater at that time was fitted with a practical or double stage, the invention of Steele Mackaye, which worked upon the elevator principle. As each act ended, one stage descended and the other, that had been set for the nextact, came down and took its place, thus obviating the necessity of long waits. One evening, during the most pathetic scene of the play,—that in which the minister hears of his daughter's flight,—when I was plunged in the deepest grief, by some mistake of

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

the carpenter the stage upon which we were acting began to descend, and it continued to do so until only my head and shoulders were visible to the audience. I kept up my grief, however, until the mistake was rectified, and by the time I had reached the climax the stage was in its proper position. Of course the seriousness of the situation was done for. The other members seemed to enjoy it all from the wings quite as much as did the audience; I think I was the only one who did not see the joke. The play had a prosperous run, and at the end of the season Mr. Palmer repeated his former policy of taking the company on tour to other cities, extending the trip to San Francisco. All the principals, including Kelcey, Masson, Le Moyne, Davidge, Miss Russell, and myself, were among the members. We were sent this time by a different route, the Rio Grande, which was then, I believe, a narrow-gage road. I shall always remember the beauty of the scenery along this journey, much more beautiful and romantic, I think, than that visible along the route of

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

the Central Pacific. In some respects it was not so pleasant, for, owing to the high altitude at portions of the journey, the lightness of the air caused some discomfort among the ladies. Miss Burroughs and Miss Russell were particularly affected, even to the point of fainting dead away and being picked up like babies and carried to their berths. We played in San Francisco first this year, stopping at Sacramento, Salt Lake, Denver, Omaha, and other cities on our return trip.

In Chicago "The Martyr" was produced, and also "Jim the Penman." The first was a moderate success, the latter a tremendous one. The same fortune attended both plays when produced in New York: "The Martyr" did very little, while "Jim the Penman" ran the season. It was a very easy time for me, as I was not cast in the latter play. I was living in the country, and for an entire season came into the city only once a week, and that on salary day. Thus my position was quite a sinecure, and although it was not altogether a pleasant reflection that I was

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

paid liberally without rendering any return, still, as the theater was making money and my manager met me so pleasantly every pay-day, the qualms of conscience did not unduly disturb me. So after receiving—I won't say the reward of merit, but my stipend, I returned cheerfully to my farm, only leaving it again to repeat the same pleasant operation the following week. At the conclusion of the prosperous run of "*Jim the Penman*" and of my long term of inactivity, engagements were played, I think, at nearly all of the places which we visited annually; but nothing unusual occurred during this time.

"*Jim the Penman*" having proved so prosperous, of course it became the chief attraction of our repertory. Our summer season ended, we opened the home theater on November 10, 1887, with a production of "*The Martyr*." I was somewhat disappointed in the way it was received, for although it did not draw particularly well in Chicago, it seemed to make a very favorable impression, and was highly

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

spoken of by the press. It proved, however, to be of too melodramatic and somber a character to suit the patrons of the Madison Square Theater.

We produced a very pretty play called "Heart of Hearts" at the Madison Square on January 16, 1888. I had a long and a very good part in it. I remember this play more vividly than any other of my experience, for it was played in the year of the great blizzard. I was living, at the time, on my farm in New Jersey, and on a Monday afternoon, in the height of the great storm, I left home for the theater some hours before my usual time, fearing difficulty in reaching the city. The snow, however, was so deep and the sleet and snow driving in such a furious and blinding manner that I could scarcely see a rod before my face, and the cold was intense. I had a splendid strong man with me who had been a Danish soldier and feared nothing. We started in a two-wheeled cart, thinking that the best sort of vehicle to get through the drifts for the station at Rahway, two miles away. We had pro-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ceeded but a short distance before, in plunging through the drifts, the shafts of the cart broke short off. Nothing daunted, we returned to the stables, and directing the man to saddle two of my horses, I determined to endeavor to get through on horseback ; so, mounting, we started the second time. The drifts of snow were up to the horses' shoulders, but being strong animals they plunged through it for some distance, until, reaching the house of a farmer about half-way to the village, the animals gave up and could go no farther. I cannot begin to describe the difficulties and the pain we suffered. I wore a huge comforter around my shoulders and face, and that, together with my gloves, and in fact all my garments, were as stiff as a board with ice and snow. The horses being completely fagged out, we were obliged to put them into the farmer's stable.

As I was determined, however, to reach the theater at all hazards, I directed my man Hans to remain with the horses at the farmer's until he could get them home

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

again, and I started alone to reach the railway-station on foot. I will not try to describe my difficulties on the way. The distance was about three quarters of a mile. I was frequently up to my waist in drifts of snow, holding on to the top of the picket fences as I crawled along. Finally I reached the village and the railroad-station, only to find that all communication by rail had stopped. The telegraph wires were all down, and communication with the city therefore cut off; so I could do nothing. I went to the hotel, where I remained for two days, being able neither to reach the city nor my home; and when at last I reached New York, I could scarcely recognize it. Broadway looked like the arctic regions with its mountains of snow, which in many places were tunneled and fires built underneath to get rid of the enormous drifts. The theater was closed one night, so I missed one performance of "Heart of Hearts," and reported for duty the third day after the storm.

On April 2 "Partners" was produced, with young Salvini in the leading rôle, in

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

which he gave a very fine performance. The rest of the cast was made up of all the principal members. "Partners" ended the season, and then began our usual summer tour, which opened at the Chicago Opera House, the first time the company had ever played in that theater. At the conclusion of the engagement the members made their usual preparations for the California trip. It was thought necessary to purchase a few essential things, such as fruit and other delicacies. Most of us, too, donned costumes suitable for crossing the desert. I remember William Davidge's get-up caused us much amusement. He wore the most eccentric suit of clothes and a sort of helmet hat, also carrying half a dozen palm-leaf fans and a large basket of fruit and provisions. "What do you think of this make-up, boys?" he said. "No fear of the alkali spoiling these things, is there?" Davidge laughed, as we all did. I little thought of what was soon to happen, little thought that death was so soon to take from us one whom I had known and acted with so long.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Although Davidge had been in ill health before we started, he was anxious again to take the trip. He had told me before starting that Mr. Palmer tried to persuade him not to go, warning him that on account of his advanced age he was not strong enough to stand the fatigue of the journey. He was so persistent, however, that Mr. Palmer yielded, and he joined the company. We had our usual private car on this trip, and all went well until we reached Cheyenne in Wyoming. Davidge had been engaged during the day in a heated political discussion with some of the gentlemen, and had become much excited. In the evening, to please him,—for he believed so implicitly in everything that was English,—the members of the company had been singing “God Save the Queen,” and Davidge had joined in the chorus with the greatest vigor, and retired in high spirits. His berth was next to mine. At about one o’clock in the morning I was awakened by his heavy and labored breathing. It seemed that he was almost strangling. The whole company became

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

alarmed. He gasped out a request for more air. Salvini, Masson, Presbrey, and I supported him to the rear platform of the car, which was stationary, as the train lay over at Cheyenne for an hour or so. He looked around, saying, "Oh, my God, surely I am not going to die here, away from them all!" Salvini picked him up like a child and carried him into the smoker, where we poured brandy down his throat, tearing open his night-dress and rubbing his breast with the liquor. "Breathe—breathe," Salvini urged, as he rubbed him with the liquor. Davidge looked at us all vacantly; his last words were: "Boys, good-by." Never until my dying day shall I forget his look as the shadows of death dropped like a veil over his face. The moon shining outside made it all as bright as day, while for miles in the distance nothing could be seen but the sage-brush of the desert. They improvised a sort of stretcher, and laying poor Davidge upon it, four of the company carried him to the undertaker's shop at Cheyenne. We kept upon our journey west, and our

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

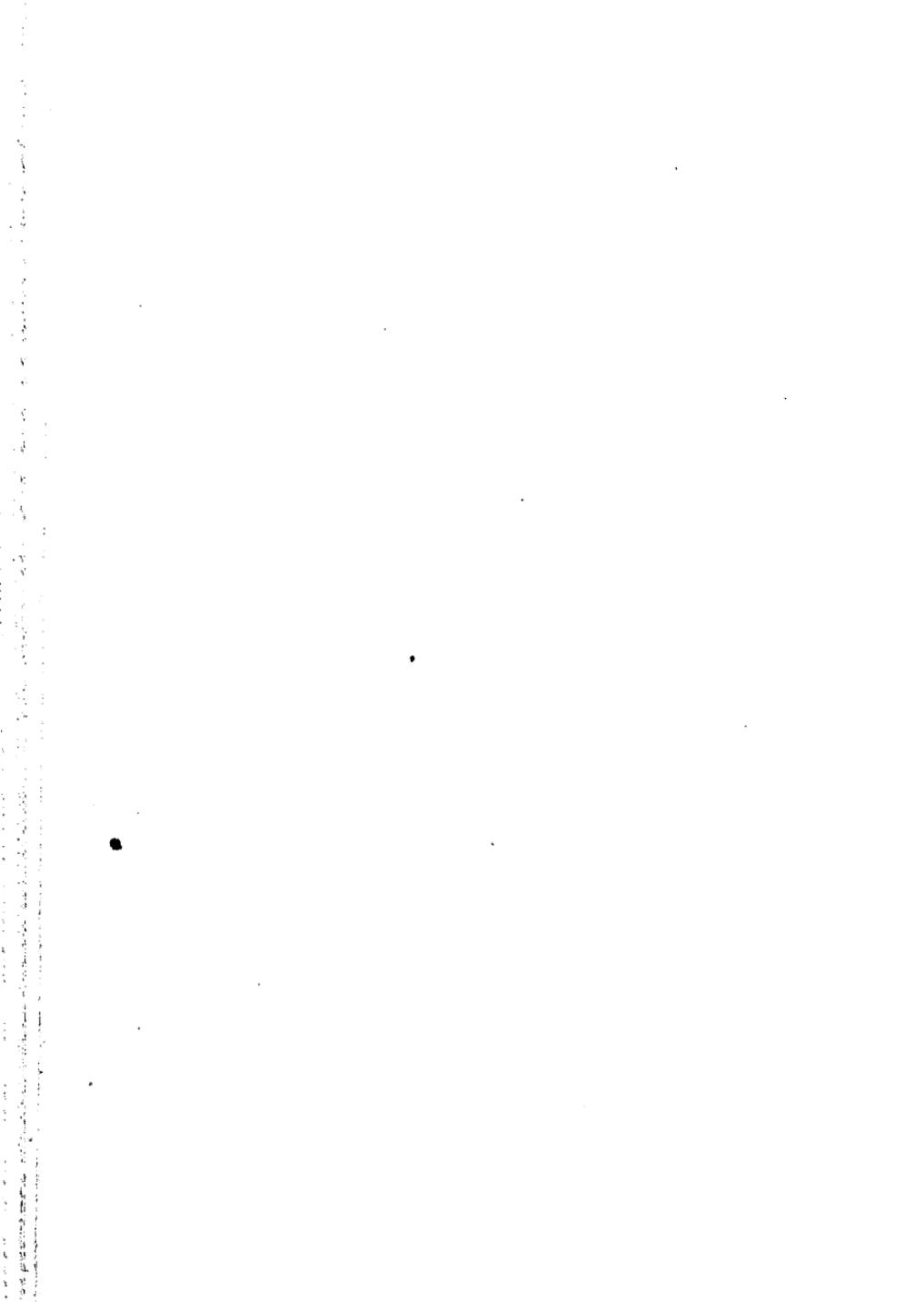
poor friend was sent back to New York—a sad home-coming for his dear ones !

I had known him for many, many years. When I was a boy with Alexander in Glasgow, Davidge was a great favorite in Edinburgh, and on my arrival in America I found him quite as popular in New York. To those who did not know him his peculiarities were sometimes a little irritating ; but he was a large-hearted man, ever ready to assist the deserving, and to the end of his life was most anxious to remain employed, so that those depending on his exertions should want for nothing. He was ever a devoted husband and father, and a stanch friend.

On December 4, 1888, "Captain Swift" received its first performance. Mr. Boucicault had made a number of alterations in the play, and directed its performance. Maurice Barrymore, in the principal part, made a hit, and the play had a long and prosperous run, proving one of the strongest attractions both in New York and on the road. Mrs. Booth did some very effective work in this play, as did



Dion Boucicault.



also E. M. Holland, who had a good part. Maude Harrison, Robinson, Harry Woodruff, and Annie Russell were also well cast. The part of *Marshall*, which fell to me, had originally been played as a young man, but was rewritten to suit my years, and was made a foster-father instead of a son. I had a realistic struggle to do with Barrymore in one scene, and one day at a matinée performance we went at it with such earnestness that we both displaced our wigs; Barrymore's slipped down the back of his neck, and mine cocked over my eye. The young ladies in the orchestra seats seemed to enjoy our unpleasant position, and giggled throughout the scene. Barrymore was angry for a moment or two at the mishap, but laughed heartily on reaching our dressing-room. To me Barrymore was one of the brightest and most entertaining men I ever met—a bohemian in many respects, but generous to a fault. His performance of *Captain Swift* I considered masterly. He was a most amusing companion, with an inexhaustible supply of anecdotes.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Often while on the road I have known the company (after the evening's performance) to sit up till break of day, held spell-bound by his brilliant talk and happy wit.

About this time I made up my mind that amateur farming and fruit-growing was not the most rapid way of obtaining fortune, so I parted with my farm. My pear orchard had proved sadly disappointing, but anticipation of a better result was for many years a *fruitful* source of pleasure. My love for the country has, however, never diminished, but I am contented to indulge it upon a smaller scale; so even now I may be seen wending my way to Sewaren, another home place in New Jersey, where I have—at least, I think so—a charming cottage overlooking Staten Island Sound, of course a garden, a yacht, and many dear friends with whom I hope still to pass many pleasant days. Of course the place that we had built up, beautified, and made our home for twenty years, where our children had grown from "wee tots" to manhood and womanhood, was left with great regret. Beyond old associa-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

tion and the beauty of my home there was little else to make the place attractive. We had one or two pleasant neighbors, but beyond them the country was populated (and very sparsely) by the typical small Jersey farmer—a very good sort of person if you only understand him, but very inquisitive, wanting to know all about your circumstances, your occupation, and if you have a mortgage on your farm. **It** would surprise one to be told that a person born within twenty miles of New York had never seen that city, and yet was eighty years old. My brother George and I were standing in my pear orchard **one** day when there appeared the oddest-looking old fellow we had ever seen—a veritable *Rip Van Winkle*. He looked **a** hundred. His long hair and beard **were** as white as milk, and he held in his **hand** a long stick of oak. He lived not **many** miles from my place, and yet seemed **to** have discovered a new country. He came up to us and said, “Is this your place?” I told him I thought it was. “Well,” said he, “if old Jonathan Bloomfield could

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

come out of his grave he'd never have known it; and yet he was born here. And what might be your business?" I told him I was employed in New York. "Well," says he, "I ain't never been to New York. And yet I've been a traveler, too: I've been to Trenton." His bleared eyes wandered through my orchard. "For land's sake," he said, "what air you going to do with all them pears?" I put an end to the interview by stuffing his pockets with fruit, and he went hobbling through the gate muttering, "Well, well, well, old Jonathan Bloomfield's place. I never would have known it."

During Mr. Palmer's visits to Chicago his company played in all the different principal theaters there: Haverly's, now converted into a national bank; at Hooley's many times; the Grand Opera House; and for one season at the Chicago Opera House, now devoted to vaudeville; also innumerable times at McVickar's and at the Columbia Theater; and all, I think, proved profitable to the management. On one of our visits, I forgot in which year, we were

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

acting at Hooley's Theater, when, on account of the riots then disturbing the city, all places of amusement were ordered to close; in fact, all business was suspended. It was a most exciting time. The police proved incapable of coping with the mob, so the militia was called out, which seemed only to incense the people the more. In fact, the militiamen were chased through the streets and pelted from the roofs of houses. It was dangerous to be in the streets. But toward the end of the week a company of regulars arrived in the city. I shall never forget their appearance—so different from the city soldiers. They had come by a forced march from the plains; their regimentals were faded and worn, and their faces the color of mahogany. With fixed bayonets they advanced quickly upon the rioters, who fled before them like sheep, and in a very brief time all disturbance was at an end. Business soon resumed, and all the theaters were quickly in full blast again.

We opened again in New York on October 30, 1889, with "Aunt Jack." This

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

play had enjoyed a long run in London, with Mrs. John Wood in the chief part —played by Mrs. Agnes Booth on its production here. The play was a great success, and enjoyed a long run. Mr. Palmer made arrangements to give a matinée performance of it in Washington, without omitting the regular evening performance. A special train on the Pennsylvania Railroad was chartered and the track kept clear for us. I don't think I ever before rode so fast. We reached Washington at the appointed time, and Mr. Palmer had prepared for us a banquet after the performance, having taken which, we started back for New York. On our arrival we went straight from the train to the theater, having our dinner served to us in the green-room; then we went to work for the evening performance. The play never went better than on these two occasions; the trip, instead of fatiguing the company, had, I think, a tendency to enliven us.

At the end of the season the company started again to California. Agnes Booth,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

however, did not accompany us, but was replaced by Ada Dyas. We always had long engagements in "Frisco," continuing each play one week. Miss Dyas was a favorite both with the public and her associates. I always enjoyed my trips to the Pacific coast. It was so pleasant to escape the summer heat of the East. The audiences there are warm and appreciative. If they only take to an actor, nothing is left undone to make his stay pleasant and comfortable. I have there many very dear friends. I was quite accustomed to spend the early part of the day visiting the Cliff House, and used to delight in looking at Seal Rock and the seals swimming and diving into the water, all the while barking like dogs. The largest ships, too, I had ever seen came to San Francisco while I was there. I would often wander down to the docks to see the great four-masted iron vessels, delighting to read their names and learn where they hailed from. Thus occupied one day, I discovered a ship which came from Glasgow. The name immediately

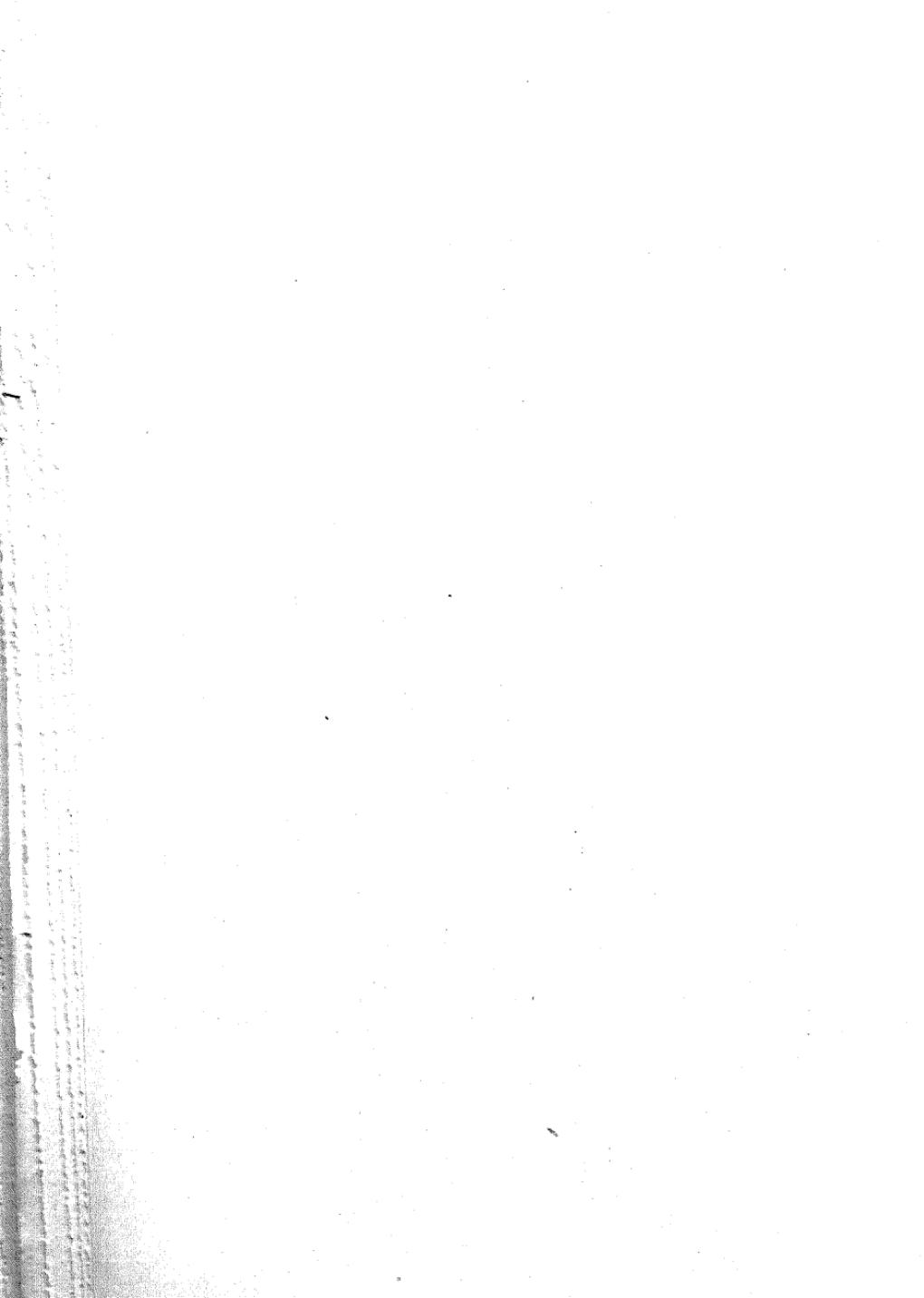
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

appealed to me, and as I stood gazing upon her, a wee chap with a white head and a red shirt came down the gangway, carrying a bucket in his hand. I could not resist speaking to him. "Ah, my wee mon," I said, dropping into the phraseology of my youth, "ye are frae Glasgow." "Oh, aye," says he, "an' I wish to the Lord I was back again." The entrance into San Francisco through the Golden Gate is truly magnificent. The city itself is most cosmopolitan, as all nationalities are to be found in "Frisco."

On each visit I spent some time in Chinatown, always going to the Chinese Theater to see a performance, as there is a great deal of courtesy extended by the management to American actors. On one occasion the manager would insist on myself and others of our ladies and gentlemen sitting on the stage during one of the performances. It was funny to see how dreadfully in earnest the actors were—killing each other with wooden swords and dying on the stage, then getting up and walking off. We all thought we had seen



Mrs. John Wood.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

the end of the play, but were told, on leaving the theater, that it lasted for a whole week. Although we had enjoyed it much, none of us cared to sit out the entire performance.

At the end of our San Francisco engagement (1892) the company visited portions of southern California, making a delightful trip. We played in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Riverside, and other towns. I was surprised to find how many New York people had settled in this region, possessing the most beautiful homes. On our arrival at Santa Barbara we were met by a party of gentlemen who treated us in the most courteous and friendly manner, having two large coaches in readiness in anticipation of our coming. I was told that we were known by most of the people, although it was our first visit. They drove us to the hotel, and insisted that later in the afternoon they should show us around the place, so that we might "see the sights," and most of the ladies and gentlemen of the company availed themselves of the courteous invitation. Years before

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

I had heard Miss Clara Morris say that she thought Santa Barbara (she had spent two summers there) was "God's own spot." I thought myself, upon first beholding it, that her description was very apt. The situation of the place and the climate, together with the character and refinement of the people, tend to make it an ideal resort. Among other sights, not the least interesting was a visit which we made to a very old monastery, a picturesque and antiquated structure standing on a bluff and overlooking the sea. It was inhabited by real live monks with their long gray gowns and cowls, beads and sandals. I had quite an interesting talk with one of them, a very old man, who gave me a history of the place. The clearness of the sky, the mildness of the air, the lovely sea-view, and our pleasant acquaintance with the old monastery and its inmates, created an impression which will always linger in my mind. The theater was in an out-of-the-way portion of the city, and not a very attractive place when we reached it; but its location seemed to make little

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

difference, for the audience was a brilliant one. One really might have supposed that we were holding forth in a Broadway theater, so cordial and friendly was the reception given those who had long been identified with the New York stage. It confirmed my former opinion that a reputation gained in the city of New York makes one pretty well known throughout the country.

Another great treat was afforded by our visit to Riverside. It seemed almost as if the people at Santa Barbara had journeyed hither with our company, so similar in friendliness was our reception here. We found Riverside also almost exclusively composed of people from the East. This part of California is so beautiful one can scarcely help envying the fortunate settlers. A gentleman from New York who remembered me in the Wallack time years ago, and who, like many others, had sought southern California for the benefit of his health, kindly took me in hand, showing me all the objects of interest in the vicinity. There is here a

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

lovely driveway known as Magnolia Avenue, taking its name from a magnificent row of magnolia-trees extending through the center of the road throughout its entire length of some four or five miles, the avenue itself being of a width of about two hundred feet. On either side may be seen the most charming villas and cottages, all standing in the midst of orange groves. The trees with their hanging fruit and the subtle odor of the blossoms so charmed my senses that I felt I should be quite content to live there even at the sacrifice of some of my good health. As was the case at Santa Barbara, the theater was crowded with a fashionable and friendly audience. The company took their departure next morning with much regret at bidding adieu to southern California.

We played our way back, stopping over at Kansas City, Omaha, and Chicago, Mr. Palmer joining us at the latter city. He had just returned from London, where he had seen and purchased a play with which he was delighted, entitled "A Pair of Spectacles." In London it had been

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

played at Mr. Hare's theater and proved a very great success. The part of *Benjamin Goldfinch* had been acted by Mr. John Hare, with the well-known Charles Groves in the rôle of *Gregory*—both fine parts. E. M. Holland and I were the originals in America. Mr. Palmer was in doubt as to which of the two parts I should play, but he finally cast me for *Benjamin Goldfinch* and Holland for *Gregory*. We had no vacation, but traveled until the opening of the New York season on October 30, 1890. While we were playing an engagement at the Broad Street Theater in Philadelphia, Mr. Palmer came on and directed the rehearsals of "A Pair of Spectacles." What with continual travel and playing long parts nightly, I found the study of so long a part as *Goldfinch* a task, and as the time approached for our opening in New York with the piece, I found myself ill with apprehension. I went to Mr. Palmer and explained my feelings to him, with the result that, as usual, he met me in the kindest manner, admonishing me not to worry, and assuring me that

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

until I came to him and said that I felt quite easy in the words the play should not be produced. This was only another instance of Mr. Palmer's kind forbearance and consideration. I think, however, that he fully understood that whatever trouble I gave him was occasioned more by my nervous temperament than by any wish to shirk my duty. The production of this play was forestalled by another version of the same story, which was done a short time before our opening. I suppose it may have hurt our production a little, but those who stole a march upon us did themselves no good, either in an artistic or a pecuniary sense. "A Pair of Spectacles" was a delightful little play, but while it achieved a fair measure of success, it certainly did not receive the support its merit deserved. Personally I have never played a part more to my liking than was my rôle in this play.

On April 1, 1891, "Alabama," a play from the pen of Augustus Thomas, was produced. Its immediate success was, I fancy, a surprise, for I, as well as other

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

members of the company, had understood that the management had not a great opinion of its merits. However, be that as it may, after the first performance there remained not the slightest doubt as to its popularity. Many regarded the play more as a rural poem than as a dramatic composition. As originally produced I have certainly never seen a sweeter little play, and it had about it the native languorous atmosphere of the South. The scenic artists offered a lovely picture, and the effect was heightened by the fragrance of magnolia-trees, which was artificially produced. Mr. Charles Harris had been engaged to strengthen the company, a result which he certainly achieved. Who that has seen his *Squire Tucker* can ever forget it? It was one of the best performances in its way I have ever seen. In *Colonel Moberly*, too, Mr. Holland had a part that suited him to perfection, and Maurice Barrymore and Mrs. Agnes Booth were at their best as *Captain Armstrong* and *Mrs. Page*. Agnes Miller, also, brought a sweet and captivating personality to the part of *Carey*,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

the young Southern girl. In this play Reuben Fax appeared as an old colored retainer, and made in it the first hit of his professional life. I played the part of *Colonel Preston*, and, barring my Southern dialect, or the lack of it, I think the part suited me well. In fact, the cast was almost perfect. The run was unfortunately interrupted by the fact that the Madison Square Theater had been sublet for a summer production to Mr. Tom MacDonough, and, as he refused to give up his dates, "Alabama" was forced to withdraw in the height of its success, and the company went on tour, beginning with an engagement at Washington. We traveled all the summer, and played at Hooley's in Chicago for several weeks in "Alabama." During this trip we made our first visit to Tacoma, Seattle, and Portland, in all of which cities we played brilliant engagements. I shall always remember our trip up the Columbia River, which occupied an entire day. The scenery, added to its native grandeur, had for us the charm of novelty. I saw more salmon in this stream in a few hours



Charles L. Harris as Squire Tucker in "Alabama."



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

than I had ever seen in all my life before, and yet my experience in Scotland in that way had been considerable. Our party, too, this season was an exceptionally jolly one. Barrymore, Holland, and Harris could usually banish dull care under almost any circumstances, but on this particular trip they seemed to outdo themselves in pleasantry. Charley Harris was a New Orleans man, and was brimful of Southern anecdotes. I am sure it would have been worth the price of admission to any theater to have seen and heard him on this occasion. He sang many of the old negro songs, the company joining in the chorus, and sang them so characteristically, and told so many droll darky stories, that it convulsed not only his associates, but most of the boat's crew, who had gathered around to hear. We reached Portland in the evening, and found it a delightful city, and our quarters at a magnificent hotel filled with fashionable people. We were surprised at the array of beautifully dressed women and modish men which our party encountered upon

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

being shown into the dining-room. We could see that some of them recognized us immediately, for at one of the tables we heard it remarked as we passed by : "Why, there 's Barrymore. Yes, and Holland. And there 's old Mr. Stoddart." We learned afterward that there were many New-Yorkers present, which accounted for our recognition. We played a fine engagement, and then worked our way back to New York, where we opened the next season at Palmer's Theater (formerly known as Wallack's) with a reproduction of "Alabama." Again the play did well, although it was the opinion of most of us that had the original production not been interrupted it could have run an entire season.

On February 3, 1892, "The Broken Seal" was produced. It had been played by Mr. Beerbohm Tree, in London, under the title of "The Village Priest," and, I believe, successfully. It did not fare so well in America. It was in this play that Miss Julia Arthur made her first appearance with the company, and it was also the occasion

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

of the first appearance of Mr. James K. Hackett in a part of any prominence on the professional stage, although as an amateur he had been well known for some time.

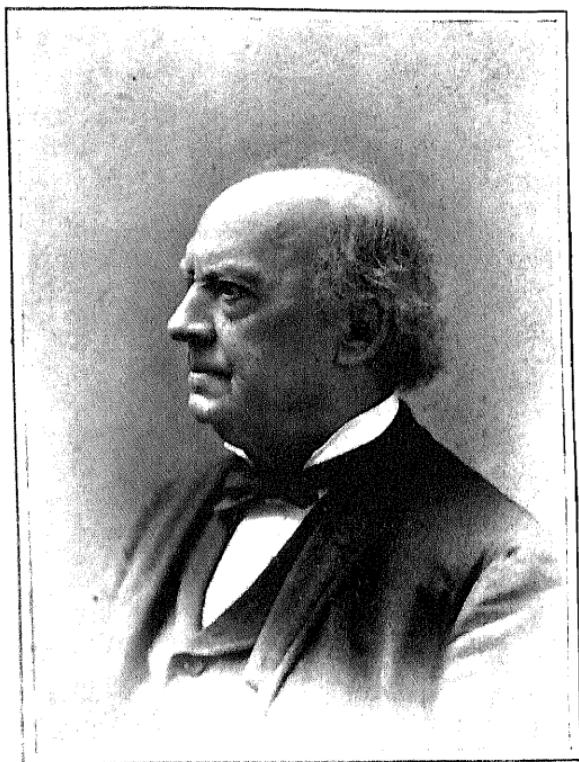
In April of this year, and during the run of this play, I received the saddest blow of my life in the death of my dear wife; and my necessary absence from the performances gave to Mr. Hackett an opportunity which he much desired, for he was put on in my place.

After this season the company went on tour again, and were kept traveling for nearly two years. Miss Arthur was now a regular member of the company, and E. J. Henley had also joined, as had Miss Ida Conquest, who at this time began her theatrical career with Mr. Palmer. The company played in all the principal cities, including a long engagement in Chicago, where we made a reproduction of "Alabama" at the Columbia Theater. After visiting the Western cities we extended the tour into the Southern States, visiting St. Louis, Louisville, Memphis, and New

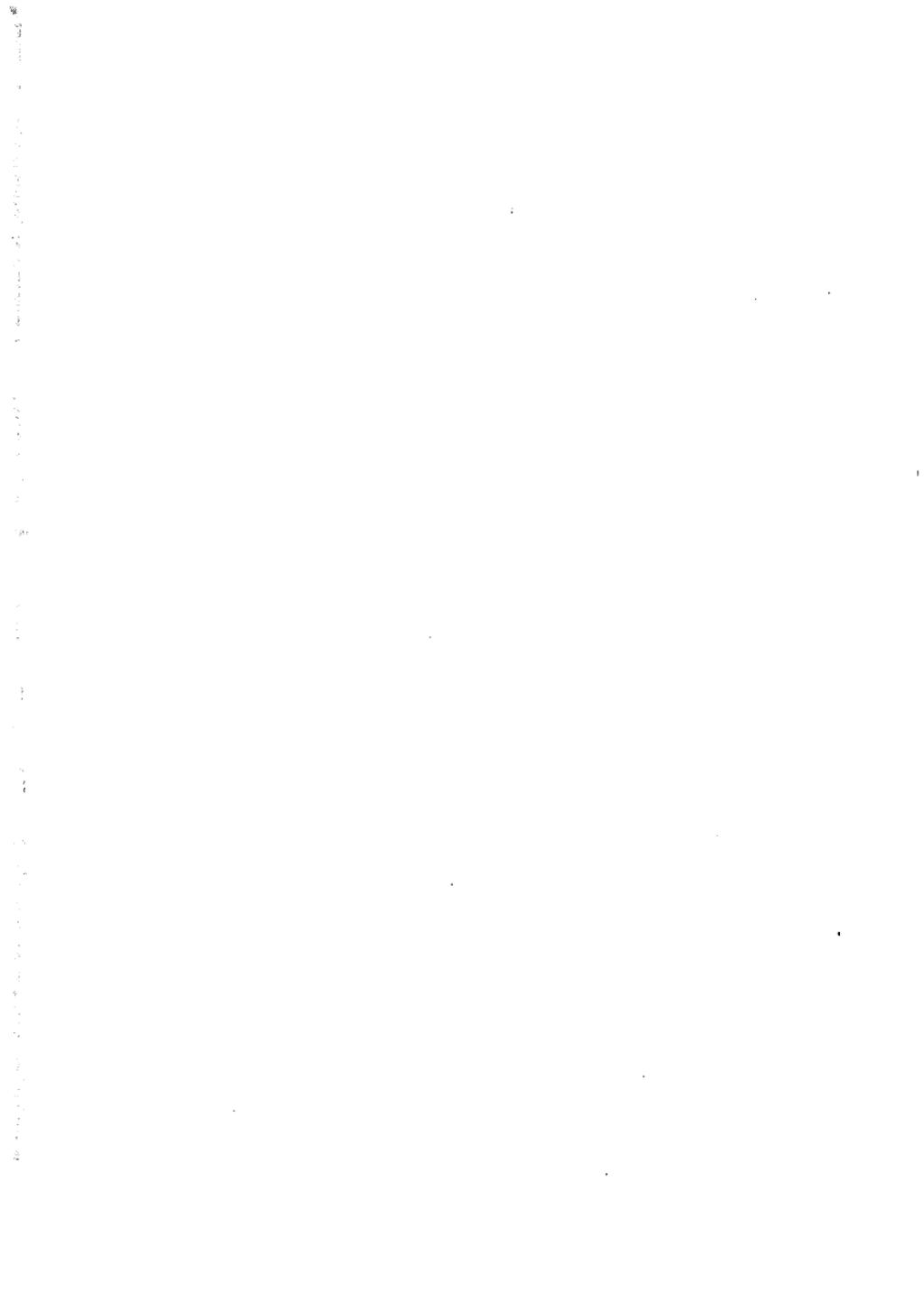
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

Orleans. At the latter place we found Miss Effie Ellsler playing at the Opera House, and my old friend C. W. Coulcock a member of her company. We lived at the same hotel, and had many pleasant chats together. Coulcock was full of reminiscences, and could tell a story in the drollest manner and with as good effect as any one I have ever met. He was well known in New Orleans and had a great many friends, whom it was his custom to meet after the performance, often insisting upon my going with him. Upon these occasions Coulcock would keep us all greatly amused for hours with his experiences of bygone days.

After New Orleans we retraced our steps, revisiting many of the cities, "Alabama" being our chief attraction. Charley Harris at this time began to complain of illness, and although he traveled constantly with the company, he acted only occasionally. He looked so strong and hearty it seemed hard to realize that he was afflicted with a fatal malady. His absence from the cast made such a differ-



C. W. Coulcock.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ence in the performance that I now reproach myself with having on more than one occasion tried to laugh him out of his indisposition and persuade him to act. I remember, in one place, it was nearly time to go to the theater, and I waited for him at the hotel where we were living, and said, "Come along, Charley; it's time to go to the theater"; to which he replied, with tears in his eyes, "For God's sake, Governor, don't ask me to act to-night; you don't know how ill I feel." It was the truth, for he never played again. It so happened that a friend for whom he had done much years before was at the same hotel, and insisted on taking him in charge. The company moved on in the morning, leaving poor Harris with his friend, and the next time we saw him he was in the Chicago Hospital. We learned that there was no hope for his life. Some members of the company visited him every day, and he wanted for nothing. Throughout all he was brave and uncomplaining, and the nurses at the hospital were untiring in their attention and so gentle in their

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

treatment that the company, in recognition of their kindness, subscribed for and presented to them a little testimonial as a mark of appreciation. Shortly afterward poor Harris died, and thus ended the earthly career of a whole-souled, genial fellow. Not many months before he had been the life of our little party, with his songs and his stories, as we sailed up the Columbia River.

Mr. Palmer had made an arrangement with Al Hayman to play his company in San Francisco for a sort of stock season, presenting its entire repertoire. Mr. Wilton Lackaye now joined as leading man, and we played for ten or twelve weeks, presenting all the old plays, and also producing in quite an elaborate manner Henry Arthur Jones's "The Dancing Girl." The season, however, did not prove so successful as former ones, perhaps because the times were not so good. Upon our return we played in all the important cities, and again went South. The opening of the next season was with the production of a play in which I was not cast, and

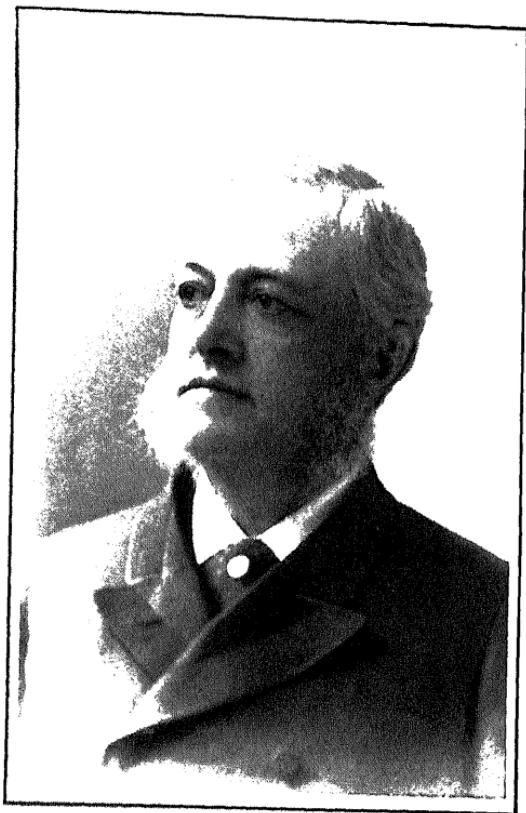
## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

in the meantime I received a letter from Salt Lake asking me to go there and play for a week with an amateur organization in "Saints and Sinners." As the offer was a liberal one, and Mr. Palmer consented, I went. "Saints and Sinners" had always been a favorite play in Salt Lake. Although it was quite a long journey to take for a week's engagement, I was amply repaid by the warmth of my reception and the kindly courtesy extended to me during my brief visit. We had only two rehearsals, and it really would have astonished many old professionals to have seen the careful attention, earnestness, and ability displayed by my Mormon associates. The play was excellently staged and well performed. The parts of *Lettie Fletcher* and *Hoggard* were acted by near relatives of Brigham Young, and *Ralph Kingsley* was played by Mr. Heber Wells, the present governor of Utah, and in a manner that would have been creditable to any experienced actor. Mr. Whitney, editor of the Salt Lake "Herald," was stage-manager, business man, and in fact general

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

factotum of the enterprise. Mr. Palmer had played his company for a great many years in Salt Lake while on its way to the coast, and it has always been to me a source of pleasure to visit the city. The company's visits had ever been anticipated and arrangements for their stay made, so as to render it pleasant and agreeable. Much was done for our amusement, including organ recitals at the Mormon Temple, excursions to the lake, social receptions, etc. When one contemplates what has been accomplished in this city in creating as it were a garden out of a desert, founding and building so beautiful a metropolis, bespeaking so much toil, thrift, and indomitable perseverance, it must call for sincere admiration and command great respect. The week ended, I said good-by to my Salt Lake friends with much regret and returned to New York.

After my return I did not again play until New Year's eve, 1894, when the drama of "The Fatal Card" was produced at Palmer's Theater; I was loaned for this production by Mr. Palmer. I had heard



A. M. Palmer.



## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

rumors that Mr. Palmer would give up his theater and retire from management, so I sought an interview with him, and found that the reports were true. Mr. Palmer told me that he found it impossible now to secure new and attractive material for his theater, and so thought it better to withdraw. He had been my manager for more than half of my American career; during all this time he had been uniformly kind and generous with me, and however great his regret may have been in parting with me, I am sure it could not exceed mine in saying good-by to him.

After "The Fatal Card" had run its course at Palmer's, it was taken to Chicago, and then back to New York, where it was played successfully at the Academy of Music until the approach of warm weather. The following season I was reengaged by Mr. Charles Frohman to play *Joe Aylmer* in the original production here of "The Sporting Duchess." The play ran most of the season at the Academy of Music, and was then taken to Philadelphia

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and Boston, where we ended our season with it at the Hollis Street Theater. Mr. Frank Perley arranged with Mr. Frohman to take the piece the following season. Mrs. Booth played her original part of the *Duchess* for a while, and on her retirement was replaced by Miss Rose Coghlan. Many other changes in the cast took place, but under Mr. Perley's management the general excellence of the original production was kept up. I acted in the play for nearly three seasons.

During its run at the Academy of Music Mr. Harry Mann, the business manager, came into my dressing-room one evening, and informed me that Mr. Frohman and my associates contemplated presenting me with a loving-cup, and wanted to ascertain from me a few facts about my career : how long I had been on the stage, and so on. As I have never forgotten my débüt in "The Rent Day" when I was five years old, I told Mr. Mann that I had been sixty-three years upon the stage. "Good Lord, man," he said, "how old are you, anyway?" Of course I explained that I was not actu-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ally as old as the statement would seem to indicate. The episode of the presentment of the cup was an unexpected compliment. Mr. Frohman's kind consideration in having my old manager Mr. Palmer make the speech of presentation, and his invitation to all the ladies and gentlemen of the various theaters to meet me on the occasion, and my old manager's complimentary remarks upon our long association, together with Mr. Jefferson's kind gift inscribed "For Auld Lang Syne," are incidents in my life which will never be forgotten.

During my engagement with Mr. Charles Frohman, a friend of long standing had been reading with a great deal of pleasure the tales of Ian Maclaren, and was particularly interested in "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush." He came to see me at my cottage at Sewaren, and said: "Mr. Stoddart, before you end your theatrical career I want to see you play old *Doctor MacLure*. He is a great character." I told him I thought it would be difficult to get Dr. Watson's consent to having his stories put

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

into dramatic form and produced. "Oh," said my friend, "I know MacArthur of the 'Bookman.' He 's a Glasgow chap and a friend of Dr. Watson's, and I am sure he can arrange it." But MacArthur, like myself, thought that Watson, being a Scotch minister, would scarcely consent to having his stories reproduced for theatrical purposes. My friend was persistent, however, and at length prevailed upon MacArthur to write to Dr. Watson, and we were all surprised and delighted at receiving his reply. It was to the effect that if the story could be dramatized effectively and well, he had no objection. On receipt of this letter, MacArthur, in conjunction with Tom Hall, set to work and produced a manuscript which, when completed, MacArthur brought out to my cottage and read to my daughter and me. We liked it. It read well.

It was the intention to make *MacLure* the prominent character of the piece, and the part was written for me. And he certainly is the most delightful person in the story; but in the play he lacked situation

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

and the dramatic worth of *Lachlan Campbell*. I told the authors so, and for some time it remained a disputed question which of the two parts I should play, which was settled only by my refusal to play the *Doctor*. Since its production, I feel that I did not err in my judgment. It was pointed out to me, and I realized the truth of the remark, that during my long career I had wept over a rather lengthy list of wayward daughters; in fact, one of my friends, quite an admirer, had said: "Poor Mr. Stoddart! I never see him act but he is heartbroken over the misconduct of some wayward and disobedient child. The last time I saw him, in 'The Sporting Duchess,' he was in a most forlorn condition regarding the fate of his daughter *Mary Aylmer*; and the time before he was completely upset at the imprudent behavior of his child in 'Saints and Sinners.'"

A little of "the same old man again," I confess, but I console myself with the reflection that in my time I have played so many rogues and vagabonds, with quite a sprinkling of cutthroats and murderers,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

that as I near the end of my professional life it would be prudent to make my final bow in something of a more respectable nature. Besides, *Lachlan Campbell* is not altogether a sympathetic or lovable person ; before his transformation he is quite the reverse.

I had that fact brought home to me in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. One of the stage-hands, watching the progress of the piece, was highly incensed when, in the second act, I erase my daughter's name from the Bible and forcibly eject her from the house. "Oh, the old devil !" said he to one of my associates. "Them religious fanatics are the worst. I 'd like to knock the old villain on the head." In the third act, when *Lachlan* sorrows over the loss of his child, he found a better place in the esteem of that critical gentleman, who, at the end of the piece, where *Lachlan* takes his daughter lovingly in his arms, was heard to exclaim, "The old man is not so bad, after all."

"The Bonnie Brier Bush" I regard as a pretty little play. It is a simple story, and its atmosphere is peculiarly congenial

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

to me, reminding me of that part of Scotland (Perthshire) wherein its scenes are laid, and where as a boy I began my career as an actor. And if *Lachlan Campbell* is to be my last effort, there is something beautifully fitting in ringing down the final curtain on "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," so suggestive in its setting of my earliest stage days.

Charles Frohman produced "The Only Way," with Henry Miller as the star, at the Herald Square Theater, September 19, 1899, and I then rejoined him for the part of *Lorry*. My old friend D. H. Harkins, whom I had met years ago in Montreal, was also in the cast, and it gave me an opportunity of renewing an acquaintance made when we were both much younger. After its New York run we toured the country with "The Only Way." Mr. Miller's performance of *Carton* I have always admired. I am indebted to him for his uniform kindness and consideration during the period I had the pleasure of being associated with him.

When our season closed, Mr. Miller

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

played an engagement in San Francisco. The success achieved was well deserved, for the company was a fine one, consisting of Frank Worthing, E. J. Morgan, Charles Walcot, Miss Margaret Anglin, Margaret Dale, Mrs. Thomas Whiffen, and a number of other well-known people. Mr. Miller was kind enough to ask me to go with him at this time ; his season, however, being a long one, and necessitating a frequent change of bill, I felt that now the study would be too arduous for me. As, however, he ended his season with "The Only Way," my old friend Harkins and I joined him for that production and played our original parts. I was glad of an opportunity to renew the acquaintance of old friends at "Frisco," and more than pleased to find that they had not forgotten me. The business for the two weeks during which "The Only Way" was performed was enormous, and there is no doubt that its run could have been extended for a considerable time had not arrangements been made for its production elsewhere. The company played in

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

most of the important cities on its way home, and in Salt Lake I had another chance of meeting my old friends who had acted with me in "Saints and Sinners." On this occasion we were pleasantly entertained—Mr. Miller and I—by Mr. Whitney, at whose house we met Governor Wells and many pleasant people. Salt Lake, if I may judge from my own experience, is, for its size, one of the best of theatrical cities.

Mr. Miller, whose health had been impaired, was obliged to retire from the company when we reached Colorado Springs, deciding that it was necessary to return to New York to consult his physician. His part in "The Only Way" was taken by Mr. E. J. Morgan, who played the part at a few hours' notice and gave a highly creditable performance. We visited Cleveland and Detroit, and in due course arrived in New York.

I have been frequently asked for my opinion regarding the relative merits of performances and performers of the present day as compared with those of the old

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

times. In fact, very recently a friend said to me: "Mr. Stoddart, you are an old-timer. I remember you when you used to be at the Broome Street Theater with Wallack. Why can't we have such performances and such companies nowadays?" I really was unable to make a satisfactory reply. I endeavored to explain that although my long experience and my age truly classified me as an old-timer, yet as I had been in harness continually since 1854, trying always to keep abreast of the times and the younger element, and as far as possible to avoid being considered antiquated, I scarcely thought myself a proper judge. A comparison of the old with the new order of things is somewhat difficult. Mr. Coghlan and Mr. Thorne I regarded as modern in style, and I considered them both artists in every sense of the word. On the other hand, Blake, Burton, Gilbert, Brougham, Placide, and Fisher might be said to represent the old school. Time, I imagine, has little to do with ability. 'T is the individual, not the period.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

The attention given to production is now so infinitely more careful and thorough than in the old days as to admit of no comparison. The same old stock scenery, formerly used year after year, would be looked upon as a very poor apology for the manner in which plays are now put upon the stage. The same advancement applies to incidental music, and in fact to all the details connected with the conduct of the theater. To those, however, entering the theatrical profession with the idea of making it their life-work, I say that I think the old system immeasurably better than that of the present time. As in all occupations it is well to be grounded in the rudimental portions of the work, so no less does this rule apply to the theatrical profession. There was no royal road to position in the old days, but most people had to commence at the bottom of the ladder and ascend it gradually, the goal being its top. And if one never climbed very high, yet the very strife and endeavor of itself gave to him that repose, that ease of deportment, which I think quite essen-

tial in the actor. Such discipline was formerly deemed necessary, and if, after submitting to it, one was not found particularly brilliant, one was at least experienced, which sometimes means much.

"I have observed," said my friend, "how distinctly at ease and self-possessed are the old members of your profession when on the stage. I suppose your real old-timer never knows what it is to be nervous."

"My dear sir," I said, "he is the one who generally suffers most in that respect. Mr. Macready was always greatly upset if there was the slightest noise while he was acting. Mr. Charles Kean came to a full stop one night, and remarked to the audience: 'Ladies and gentlemen: I have been so distracted by the talking and noise behind the scenes that it has completely driven the words out of my head. I must claim your indulgence until I consult the prompter.'"

Mr. John Gilbert, in his day one of our most striking actors, often became really ill on the occasion of first-night perform-

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

ances. I can remember when we produced a piece called "Progress" at Wallack's that he had rehearsed for days and in which he was letter-perfect. But at night he completely balked. When he came off the stage he said: "Mrs. Gilbert heard me repeat the part three times before coming to the theater, but this infernal lack of nerve has played the deuce with me."

Oh, how many times the old stager envies the younger player who sets about his work undisturbed, wondering at the trepidation of his older and more experienced associate! On the eve of a new production I have often left home muttering over the words of some long part and very doubtful as to the result of my efforts; and on my return my wife, who, I think, was if possible more nervous for me than I for myself, would say, "Well, how did you get on?" And if I answered, as I frequently did, that I feared I had not done very well, "Nonsense!" she would say, "how did your part go with the audience?" When I would reply that I had received a good deal of applause,

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

"Then, dear," she would add, "you are all right."

In reviewing my career I see plenty to find fault with, even in my own estimation; but as an old-timer trying to keep pace with my younger companions, I have had to assume so many different rôles that it is scarcely to be expected that I should have proved satisfactory in all. I think I can in all truthfulness assert that to whatever work has been allotted me I have endeavored always to bring sincerity of purpose, and whether good, bad, or indifferent parts have been my portion have ever tried to serve the public to the best of my ability. And it is this thought of being "all right with the public," the kind consideration and indulgence on its part under all circumstances, ever lenient toward my faults and quick to show appreciation of any merit I might possess, that has been my main support during a long career.

In conclusion, I trust that the theater-goer of to-day, as well as the younger members of my profession, will not regard these pages as altogether without value, and that

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PLAYER

they will be interested with me in taking a retrospective view of bygone days.

The old times, the many brilliant comrades who have left me behind, must ever hold the first place in my recollections.

Time but the impression stronger makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear.